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Mauritianism
Or the Mitigated Euphoria of the Rainbow Nation

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A minor dissertation submitted in *partial fulfilment* of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in African Studies

Faculty of the Humanities

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: MOSHUMEE TEENA DEWOO Date: 11th of February 2013

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Abstract

Extensively hailed as an economic miracle¹, an irrefutable *ile durable*² that even defies until today the extrapolations and predictions of the greatest of writers such as Trinidadian V.S. Naipaul about the economic status of the country after it achieved independence³, Mauritius has also grown to be known as the archetypal independent state, nurturing a rainbow nation, *enn nation larkansiel*⁴. Indeed, one cannot deny such glimpses of Mauritianism⁵, where all come together, “as one people, as one nation”⁶, as *enn sel lepep, enn sel nation*⁷ to celebrate the island and to celebrate their Mauritianism, their perhaps-hybrid identities and their unique modes of identification. It is undeniable that, to a certain extent, lines of ethnic and cultural differences have become indistinguishable through cultural assimilation, national events, inter-ethnic marriages and post-independence socio-economic relationships, giving Mauritians the appearance of being “one people”.

However, whilst the island’s movement to a stable and successful economy is obvious, observable and is recognised around the globe, the official discourse of a peaceful multi-ethnic space, a unified multicultural nation proves limited, is mostly mystical, is outdated, if not deceptive of national Mauritian realities⁸: Mauritianism (the rainbow nation) is not described in its authentic, scientific and complete form, but is interpreted and represented, is mystified, kept romantic, euphoric, poetic, inexplicable, and remains narrow. The Mauritian aspiration to the rainbow nation, as well as progressive co-habitation, reciprocal exchanges

¹ Radelet, S. (2010) *Emerging Africa: How 17 Countries Are Leading the Way*. Washington, D.C. Center for Global Development; Radelet, S. (October 2010) *Success Stories from ‘Emerging Africa*. Journal of Democracy. Number 21, pp.87–101.

² ‘Ile durable’ means sustainable island

³ Famous extrapolation by equally famous Trinidadian writer, Naipaul, V.S. in 1972, in *The Spectator*, arguing about the demise and collapse of Mauritius as it achieved independence from Great Britain in 1968

⁴ *Nasion larkansiel* is Creole for ‘rainbow nation’, typically used by Mauritian politicians to express the co-habitation of various ethnic groups on the island of Mauritius.

⁵ Athletic patriotism is one of those moments in Mauritian society that shows Mauritius as ‘one people’.

⁶ Phrase from the Mauritian national anthem meaning “as one people, as one nation...” Mauritians usually come together as one people when national sports team play internationally, for instance.

⁷ When all are proud to be Mauritian, supporting Mauritian teams during international competitions, or praising the Mauritian cuisine and music when abroad, amongst other things. ‘Enn sel lepep, enn sel nation’ is a slogan used extensively in the 1970s and 1980s by the opposition party, the Mouvement Militant Mauricien (MMM) in attempts to define a unitary model for the nation.

⁸ The various local realities of Mauritius are far more complex than often assumed. Refer to the very eye-opening work of Boswell, R. (2006) *Le Malaise Créole: Ethnic Identity in Mauritius*. New York, Berghahn. Also refer to the work of Greig, A., Turner, M. and D’Arcy, P. (2011) *The Fragility of Success: Repositioning Mauritian Development in the Twenty-First Century*. Island Studies Journal, Vol. 6(2), pp. 157-178. Further reading on the challenges of accommodating ethnic diversity in Mauritius is by Carroll, B.W. & Carroll, T. (2000). *Accommodating Ethnic Diversity in a Modernizing Democratic State: Theory and Practice in the Case of Mauritius*. Ethnic & Racial Studies, Vol.23, No. 1, pp. 120-142

and the related socio-economic and political matters (what Mauritians experience) seem to have been simplified, if not misidentified as accomplished non-ethnic and future-oriented⁹ national unification and homogeneity (what is depicted of the Mauritian people in much of foreign – and archaic¹⁰ - scholarship and other narratives about the island's social stature).

The multicultural Mauritian nation and its development, known to Mauritians and explained by local authors¹¹, are far more nuanced and complex than the hypothetical, the imagined¹², exultant, extraordinary and 'completed rainbow nation' that is praised by many within and beyond Mauritius¹³, and that is envied by those larger nations that have not yet made their multicultural origins a socio-economic asset towards progress and prosperity. It can be argued, therefore, that although not completed, Mauritianism is a possibility sustained mainly in the imaginaries, especially those of non-Muritians, that the idyllic Mauritian nation is an imagined community¹⁴. Writing from an experiential point of view, a Mauritian perspective¹⁵, would thence contribute to the understanding and explanation of the 'less euphoric', the actual, the physical, the tangible Mauritian nation, perhaps not in its entirety, but at least in its progression, its other realities, its various waves, its challenges and its complexities. Mauritianism, as will be explained in this thesis, is not (yet) a *fait accompli*, at least not to Mauritians. It remains in many regards an aspiration. What is also interesting, following this logic, is not to look at the consequences of the myth of and the constant aspiration to Chazalian nationalism, but to explore what it claims and possesses, what it interprets and re-figures, and what it silences and suppresses.

Keywords: Mauritianism, rainbow nation, nationalism, nation-building

⁹ Eriksen, T.H. (1993) *A Non-Ethnic, Future-Oriented Nationalism? Mauritius as an Exemplary Case*. *Ethnos* Vol. 58(3–4), pp.197–221

¹⁰ In the sense that it is often information that was provided in the era of colonialism, where the white settler and his future generations would write about Africa as that fantastic and exotic space lost in time. It would seem that the discourse that they produced around Mauritius and Mauritianism has not been altered.

¹¹ Such as Sheila Bunwaree, Lindsey Collen (who writes the *The Rape of Sita*), Vijaya Teelock and Rosabelle Boswell

¹² Reference to Benedict Anderson's imagined community in Anderson, B. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso

¹³ International scholars, mostly, whose insight remains limited and dissonant to the local experience, as well as Mauritian politicians

¹⁴ Reference to Benedict Anderson's theory of the imagined community in Anderson, B. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso

¹⁵ A perspective that I will provide since I am Mauritian. It is also a perspective that moves away from colonial discourses of African exoticism

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Chapter 1: Purpose, Methodology and Structure of this Research

1.1. Introducing the Purpose of this Research

This Master thesis is a precursor to an envisaged PhD thesis that would be grounded in participatory ethnographic methods and that would embrace a more forthrightly ethnographic, empirical and much-needed¹⁶ study on Mauritianism. However, prior to an ethnographic and empirical study of the subject matter, there is a need to outline the various processes that allow for the formation of the Mauritian nation and to explain what it entails. This thesis is not an empirical or ethnographic study; it is a study informed by a critical reading of the general media, political statements, as well as ‘grey’ and empirically-informed literature on Mauritianism.

I intend to critically examine the extent to which Mauritianism – the Mauritian rainbow nation - is true and in what ways it could be perceived as more of a myth than a reality. Although Mauritianism may be illustrated in this thesis in a way that comes across as neither unduly optimistic nor unduly pessimistic, I seek to not turn a blind eye to the shortcomings of nation-building processes in the island by asking the following questions: If the Mauritian rainbow nation is completed and successful, why have there been various and continuous attempts and waves to building the Mauritian nation? If Mauritius holds the same history of colonisation, slavery, indentured labour, racial discrimination and similar ethnic and religious divides as Jamaica, and in light of the ethnic conflicts that ravaged mainland Africa in the 20th century, how is it possible that the island transformed differently and has achieved multicultural serenity where all other similar countries have failed? Why did the Mauritian Government set up a Truth and Justice Commission in 2008? Why are communal riots¹⁷ and marches¹⁸ still held? Why is the youth not content with the Mauritian government¹⁹? Why is the intensification of racial politics²⁰ still possible? And why are the Afro-Creoles and non-Hindu activists still claiming to inequality? Could the supposedly-achieved Mauritian

¹⁶ The Mauritian ethnographic landscape is a very interesting and under-researched case study of migration, syncretism and social hybridity. As such, an empirical and ethnographic study of the island would shed light on the hybrid Mauritian nation.

¹⁷ As is the case of the violent civil unrest in 1999 that occurs after and because of the mysterious death of the Creole *Seggae* singer Kaya: See Vellien, C. (February 1999) *Rioting in Mauritius set off by Jail Death of Singer*. The Guardian (UK), 25. Article accessible at www.guardian.co.uk/world/1999/feb/25/7

¹⁸ Such as the one held in 2011 by the youth, against corruption

¹⁹ Peaceful marches held by the youth in 2011 against corruption by the Hindu political elite in Mauritius

²⁰ Condemned by the Creole minority, including *Chagossians* and FCM, of *Syndicalists*, and political parties whose outcry for Creole rights is nationwide and remains neglected

rainbow nation be an illusion? Could it be that the perfect Mauritian nation has not yet been achieved? Could the phenomenon of the Mauritian nation be as ephemeral and mystical as the rainbow that symbolises it?

1.2. Methodology and Structure of Thesis

To critically examine the extent to which the Mauritian rainbow nation is true and in what ways it could be perceived as more of a myth than a reality, this thesis is structured as follows: a first set of analyses concerns the socio-economic, geographic and political occasions that inspired the myth and metaphor of the rainbow nation, leading on to an explanation of the inadequacy of such myth and metaphor based on proof that Mauritian nationalism remains an aspiration, in many regards. The second chapter is a literature review of the term nationalism, providing a basic definition of the sense of comradeship sought after in nation-building processes that is crucial to understanding and explaining the difficult development of Mauritianism. The third chapter describes a series of ephemeral, complex and nuanced processes of nation-building (the first and second adages of nationalism) in Mauritius, proving to the need to mitigate the euphoria around Mauritianism. In this chapter, the various challenges to achieving perfect nationalism are exposed, providing an insight on the difficult development of Mauritianism, and explaining how such factors as the lack of equal opportunity and good governance lead to ethnic conflicts on the island, thence preventing the achievement of the rainbow nation. It is important to remember here that the critical nature of the reflections made in this chapter (if not in all chapters in this thesis) must not be taken to mean that the Mauritian state is incapable to achieving the rainbow nation. Instead, the Mauritian state must be understood as continuously seeking to forge the Mauritian idyll. In fact, it has not stopped seeking to build a stable and long term sense of nationhood on the island since the 1960s. As is said in the fourth chapter, Mauritian leaders, despite the ephemerality and the mitigated success of the previous attempts to building and reinforcing Mauritianism, seek to circumvent and address those factors described in the third chapter by setting up a Truth and Justice Commission (TJC) in 2008 that is expected to bring about ethnic, political and economic equality to all Mauritians – to bring about perfect Mauritianism. Mauritius, it is concluded, has undergone various waves on nationalism and may very well have embarked, in the 21st century, on a new wave of nationalism based on the TJC platform, proving that the extraordinary Mauritianism that is advertised and praised by many is yet to be achieved.

1.3. References Crucial to this Thesis

A few (surprisingly mostly female) Mauritian intellectuals²¹ including Rosabelle (Rose) Boswell²², Sheila Bunwaree²³, Vijaya Teelock and Lindsey Collen have openly and extensively written or spoken about such local Mauritian issues as *Le Malaise Creole*²⁴, poverty within the Mauritian Creole minority, threats to Mauritian social cohesion, the fragility of the ‘rainbow nation’, the divided Mauritian nation, inequality, how the economy is left to “*bann misye*”²⁵ who know how to run things for a profit, something which is the will of the gods, thus unquestioned, or so the ideology goes”²⁶, the total control of academia sponsored by the private sector and the manipulation of peoples’ ideas & opinions through “communication methods (read propaganda, advertising, subliminal manipulation, fear-mongering, etc)”²⁷. Such intellectuals have challenged the country’s reputation as a stable society and polity, and have done extensive research whilst including their very own experiences and knowledge of the island in their academic work. Their work, mostly in the form of academic papers, is throughout this thesis, crucial to pointing out to the limitations and archaism in the claims of renowned academics such as Joseph Stiglitz who describe Mauritianism as being an example of perfect nationalism.

This thesis will further be based on the analysis and observation of the everyday experiences of Mauritians, the local media reports, political documents, speeches and internet searches relating to riots, marches, policies, public and political responses, political manoeuvres and movements, and political parties and their motto. Moreover, the various (ephemeral) waves of nationalism in Mauritius and the related militant activities will be weaved in the analysis

²¹ Others, mostly foreigners, have pondered on the issue of multiculturalism in Mauritius but their work is not as extensive as that of Boswell, Teelock, Bunwaree or Collen. Such authors include Carroll, B.W. & Carroll, T. (2000) *Trouble in Paradise: Ethnic Conflict in Mauritius*. Commonwealth & Comparative Politics. Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 25-50; Carroll, B.W. & Carroll, T. (2000). *Accommodating Ethnic Diversity in a Modernizing Democratic State: Theory and Practice in the Case of Mauritius*. Ethnic & Racial Studies, Vol.23, No. 1, pp. 120-142; Eriksen, T.H. (1994) *Nationalism, Mauritian Style: Cultural Identity and Ethnic Diversity*. Comparative Studies in Society and History. Vol. 36, No. 3, pp. 549-574; and Bräutigam, D. (1997) *Institutions, Economic Reform, and Democratic Consolidation in Mauritius*. Comparative Politics. Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 45-62.

²² Boswell, R. (2006) *Le Malaise Créole: Ethnic Identity in Mauritius*. New York, Berghahn.

²³ Bunwaree, S. (2001) *The Marginal in the Miracle: Human Capital in Mauritius*. International Journal of Educational Development. Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 257-271; Bunwaree, S. & Kasenally, R. (2007) ‘Introduction’ in S. Bunwaree & R. Kasenally (eds.) *Rights and Development: A Reader*. Reduit, Mauritius. OSSREA, pp. 1-30; Bunwaree, S. (2002) *Economics, Conflicts and Interculturality in a Small Island State: The Case of Mauritius*. Polis/RCPS/CPSR. Vol. 9, Special Issue, pp. 1-19.

²⁴ Boswell, R. (2006) *Le Malaise Créole: Ethnic Identity in Mauritius*. New York, Berghahn

²⁵ *Bann misye* is creole for ‘the big shots, the big guys who run the country’.

²⁶ Collen, L. and Lallah, R. (12 March 2012) *Nationalism: No Anti-Dote to Communalism or Racism, nor to Imperialism*. LALIT Conference on Strategy

²⁷ *Ibid.*,

of the development of Mauritianism. Such militant activities²⁸ include the riots, the peaceful marches, the public speeches, the boycotts and the political rallies by the Mauritian masses, the public, the youth, women²⁹ and the ‘new’ politicians that can be read about on the Internet. The youth, for example, rallied in 2011, to fight against corruption via such platforms as social media³⁰, to build “a conscious program against patriarchy, to weaken patriarchal hierarchies” and to advocate “a deep humanism, where we respect human beings for being human”³¹.

1.4. Conclusion

This Master thesis, as explained earlier, is not an empirical or ethnographic study. It is a study informed by a critical reading of the general media, political statements, as well as ‘grey’ and empirically-informed literature on Mauritianism, and is a precursor to an envisaged PhD thesis in which I intend a study deeply informed by the ethnographic present and histories of Mauritius and the different social categories that constitute it.

²⁸ Such as the peaceful march by the youth group “15000 youngsters to save our future” held in the Mauritian Capital, Port Louis on the 10th of September 2011 and uploaded onto Youtube.com at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4yBa2rntsA> on the 12th of September 2011. Video accessed on the 13th of September 2011. “15000 youngsters to save our future” also have a Facebook page called “Wanted: 15,000 Youngsters to Save Our future!” that allows for the youth to rally and speak about the issues that they are faced with in Mauritius. Another rally, called “Aret Zwe Ek Nou Lavenir”, which means “Stop Playing with Our Future”. Article available in Le Mauricien online, at <http://www.lemauricien.com/article/%C2%AB%C2%A0aret-zwe-ek-nou-lavenir%C2%A0%C2%BB-%E2%80%94-%C2%AB%C2%A0wanted%C2%A0-15%C2%A0000%E2%80%A6%C2%A0%C2%BB-%E2%80%93-quel-potentiel%C2%A0>

²⁹ Including Lindsey Collen and Rajni Lallah

³⁰ Such as the Mauritian youth Facebook rally found at <http://www.lemauricien.com/article/facebook-vent-nouveau-kinz-mil-15-000> ; <http://www.lexpress.mu/story/28263-facebook-les-jeunes-mauriciens-se-mobilisent-pour-se-faire-entendre-a-la-place-d-armes.html>; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/azirmaurice/?ref=ts&fref=ts>

³¹ Collen, L. and Lallah, R. (12 March 2012) *Nationalism: No Anti-Dote to Communalism or Racism, nor to Imperialism*. LALIT Conference on Strategy

Chapter 2: General Introduction

In this chapter, I intend to outline the reasons for which Mauritius has come to be known as an African economic success story and whether it is adequate to claim the island to be as successful a social miracle as it is an economic one. The various nation-building processes attempted by the Mauritian state and the related intricacies will also be summarised in this chapter, so as to allow for a deeper critical understanding of the claim to the ‘Mauritian social miracle’, the ‘Mauritian rainbow nation’.

2.1. Introducing the Mauritian Economic Miracle

The island of Mauritius, a ‘post-colonial’³² African state in the middle of the Indian Ocean is small, is deprived of natural resources and has economically suffered from its historical ties and political status in the years following its independence³³. But, learning from its mistakes, the Mauritian government has through the years made very wise policies and partnership decisions to negotiating crucial economic protocols that have boosted the development and maintenance of Mauritius as the most successful African economy. Amongst such wise policies, acclaimed and observed not only in the politico-economic spheres but in scholarship as well, has been the establishment of an Export Processing Zone (EPZ) and Special Economic Zones (SEZ)³⁴, which gladly welcome foreign projects and investment. The Mauritian movement away from a single cash-crop economy³⁵ has further promoted diversification and profitable investment opportunities in export-oriented trade, tourism and financial services. Duty-Free, Finance and Tax Acts have also made of Mauritius a favourable business partner whose strong economic principles put the island in the 2nd position amongst African countries in the rule of law³⁶. Today, Mauritius ranks 2nd in participation and human rights³⁷, further encouraging the country’s numerous and successful trade arrangements through the Commonwealth, the SADC (Southern African Developing

³² Supposedly post-colonial. A term that will be used only to express the island’s independence from the colonial government of Great Britain. Mauritius achieved its independence in 1968

³³ Ancharaz, V. D. (2009). *David versus Goliath: Mauritius facing up to China*. European Journal of Development Research. No.21, p.4. Mauritius achieves independence from Great Britain in 1968

³⁴ Ancharaz, V. D. (2009). *David versus Goliath: Mauritius facing up to China*. European Journal of Development Research. No.21, p.4

³⁵ Based on sugarcane and the production of sugar

³⁶ Mo Ibrahim Foundation (15 October 2012). *2012 Ibrahim Index of African Governance: Mauritius ranks 1st*. 6th Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) accessed on the 29th of October 2012 at

<http://allafrica.com/download/resource/main/main/iatcs/00050140:0c2b0b621d55e1522fa37269d2968985.pdf>

³⁷ Rotberg, I. and Gisselquist, R.M. (2009). *The Index of African Governance*. p.56-57

Countries) and COMESA (Common Market for Eastern Africa)³⁸, and allowing the island to hold the 1st position amongst African countries³⁹, and the 19th position out of 185 economies in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings⁴⁰. In addition, the World Economic Forum's 2012-2013 Global Competitiveness Report places the island 54th in the world, "the second highest ranked country in the region after South Africa"⁴¹.

The country can also boast about holding the highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of the African continent and a Gross National Income per capita of US\$8,240⁴². Furthermore, "Mauritius's HDI value for 2012 is 0.737 - in the high human development category - positioning the country at 80 out of 187 countries and territories"⁴³. Mauritius has undeniably - and unlike many of its African neighbours⁴⁴ - mastered the art of economic progress especially regarding trade preferences, the avoidance of currency over-valuation, the facilitation of business through special tax incentives, and the reversal of external dependency whilst fostering local strategies for economic integration, making the island's economy the most stable of Africa. Today, Mauritius can pride itself in being an undeniable economic miracle, a claim further demonstrated by the well-known economist Joseph Stiglitz, in his article on *The Mauritius Miracle*: "Suppose someone were to describe a small country that provided free education through university for all of its citizens, transportation for school children, and free health care – including heart surgery – for all. You might suspect that such a country is either phenomenally rich or on the fast track to fiscal crisis. [...] After all, rich countries in Europe have increasingly found that they cannot pay for university education, and are asking young people and their families to bear the costs. For its part, the

³⁸ Ramgoolam, N. (16 September 2009) *JinFei Arrive au Moment Opportun*. Le Matinal. Speech retrieved on the 8th of October, 2011 at www.lematinal.com/mobile/economie/1303-JinFei-arrive-au-moment-opportun.html

³⁹ Mo Ibrahim Foundation (15 October 2012). *2012 Ibrahim Index of African Governance: Mauritius ranks 1st*. 6th Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) accessed on the 29th of October 2012 at

<http://allafrica.com/download/resource/main/main/يداتس/00050140:0c2b0b621d55e1522fa37269d2968985.pdf>

⁴⁰ The World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (23 October 2012). *Smarter Regulations for Small and Medium-Size Enterprises: Comparing Business Regulations for Domestic Firms in 185 Economies*. The World Bank and the International Finance Corporation. ISBN 978-0-8213-9615-5. Report available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>

⁴¹ World Economic Forum (6 September 2012). *Global Competitiveness Report 2012-2013*. pg.41

⁴² The World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (23 October 2012). *Smarter Regulations for Small and Medium-Size Enterprises: Comparing Business Regulations for Domestic Firms in 185 Economies*. The World Bank and the International Finance Corporation. ISBN 978-0-8213-9615-5. Report available at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>

⁴³ Human Development Report 2013 (2013). *The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World: Explanatory Note on 2013 HDR Composite Indices: Mauritius*. Human Development Report 2013 by United Nations Development Programme, available at <http://www.hrdstats.undp.org>

⁴⁴ Such as those where deficit is rampant (Zimbabwe is an example of such an African country)

United States has never attempted to give free college for all, and it took a bitter battle just to ensure that America's poor get access to health care – a guarantee that the Republican Party is now working hard to repeal, claiming that the country cannot afford it. [...] But Mauritius, a small island nation off the east coast of Africa, is neither particularly rich nor on its way to budgetary ruin. Nonetheless, it has spent the last decades successfully building a diverse economy, a democratic political system, and a strong social safety net. Many countries, not least the US, could learn from its experience."⁴⁵ In light of the above recent statistics and rankings, it is easy to understand why Mauritius is claimed to be the African success story, the economic miracle, the successful model of economic development that many refer to when explaining the necessary steps towards building and maintaining, in and around the continent⁴⁶.

2.2. The Mauritian Rainbow Nation

It is not merely the Mauritian economic miracle that stirs enthusiasm and bewilderment. Paradise found, idyllic landscapes and principles of liberty are those myths and metaphors - used by such literary masters of the early 20th century as Malcolm de Chazal, Henri Masson and Jean-Marie Le Clezio⁴⁷, adding to Charles Darwin's and Mark Twain's 19th century parable of "heaven on earth"⁴⁸ to describe Mauritius. Such parables, unchanged, until now characterise the island as a pastoral idyll⁴⁹ where murmurs of Shakespearian⁵⁰ love stories as that of *Paul et Virginie*⁵¹ are still to be heard. "God first made Mauritius", says Mark Twain, "and from it, he created Paradise."⁵² All still speak of evocative sea voyages to Mauritius,

⁴⁵ Joseph Stiglitz, the American economist and 2001 Nobel Laureate for economics, who writes "The Mauritius Miracle", article available at <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/stiglitz136/English>

⁴⁶ That is Africa

⁴⁷ J.M.G Le Clezio is a Nobel Prize winner in literature, born in Mauritius. He wrote several pieces on the Mauritian idyll. Malcolm de Chazal and Henri Masson are amongst those artists and poets who first wrote about Mauritian nationalism, or the need for it in Mauritius. All three are important *white male figures* who participate in the construction of the myth of the Mauritian paradise-nation.

⁴⁸ Charles Darwin and Mark Twain, visiting Mauritius in the 19th century, develop the myth of 'heaven on earth' when explaining and analysing Mauritius. See Darwin, C. (eds., 1842-46) *The Voyage of The Beagle*, London . Smith, Elder & Co, archived online at: <http://darwin.thefreelibrary.com/The-Voyage-of-the-Beagle/> - accessed August 2011. P.299

⁴⁹ de Saint-Pierre, B. (1788) *Paul et Virginie*. Etudes de la Nature. , Vol. 3, p.29

⁵⁰ Typical of William Shakespeare's theatrical, dramatic and passionate love story as Romeo and Juliet that ends with the death of lovers

⁵¹ Paul was a commoner, perhaps even a slave boy who would fall in love with Virginie, a young maiden whose very rich and powerful family would not accept that she be wooed by Paul. They both eventually die, for love, much like Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.

⁵² Twain, M. (1897) *Following the Equator: A Journey around the World*. London: Chatto and Windus

unveiling the beauty of its landscape, its “vivid greens”⁵³ and “graceful tall palms”⁵⁴, the large expanse of fine sandy beaches that border splendid turquoise lagoons, a land unexplored, the terra incognita: “Terra incognita, these words stir the imagination. Through the ages men have been drawn to unknown regions by Siren voices, echoes of which ring in our ears today when on modern maps we see spaces labelled ‘unexplored’, rivers shown by broken lines, islands marked ‘existence doubtful’”⁵⁵. The island is in the 21st century apparently not different from what it was said to be in the 19th and 20th century: “Mauritius”, affirms the United Nations’ Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon in 2012, “is a country of migrants where the fusion of great cultures is on display everywhere. Here, neighbours celebrate different religions by bringing each other traditional sweets and opening their festivities to all. Mauritius has rightly been called la nation arc en ciel [the rainbow nation]”⁵⁶.

What exactly is a ‘rainbow nation’? Coined by South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu and symbolising the “unity for South African people”⁵⁷ as well as the ‘new’ South Africa in the post-apartheid era, the discourse of the ‘rainbow nation’ has been used “to promote national reconciliation through mutual respect of differences”⁵⁸. The ‘rainbow nation’ becomes, in the early 1990s, a national symbol enforced through national programs and nation-building initiatives to consolidating South Africa’s united democratic state and to promote a peaceful transition from Apartheid to non-racial democracy. In this manner, the metaphor of the ‘rainbow nation’ seeks to reinforce the image of South Africa as a cultural melting pot where all are able to practise tolerance and respect for the other, despite their ethnic, political, economic, religious, historical and ancestral differences. The metaphor of the rainbow nation

⁵³ Mark Twain’s depiction of its “vivid greens” and “graceful tall palms” in his 1897 travelogue *Following the Equator: A Journey Around the World*. See Twain, M. (1897) *Following the Equator: A Journey around the World*. London: Chatto and Windus

⁵⁴ Mark Twain’s depiction of its “vivid greens” and “graceful tall palms” in his 1897 travelogue *Following the Equator: A Journey Around the World*. See Twain, M. (1897) *Following the Equator: A Journey around the World*. London: Chatto and Windus

⁵⁵ Mauritius is represented by the coloniser, in particular manners, discourses and images, and is celebrated for its exoticism and strategic importance, as explains the former Association of American Geographers president, Wright, J.K. quoted in Phillips, R. (1997) *Mapping Men and Empire: A Geography of Adventure*. New York, Routledge. p 3

⁵⁶ Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon’s remarks to Global Forum on Migration and Development [delivered by Peter Sutherland, Special Representative for Migration and Development] at Reduit, Mauritius, 21 November 2012. United Nations 2012. Article available online on the UN website

⁵⁷ Dickow, H., Møller, V. and Harris, M. (2002) *South Africa’s ‘Rainbow People’, National Pride and Happiness*. Rhodes University

⁵⁸ Baines, G. (1998) *The Rainbow Nation?: Identity and Nation Building in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Rhodes University

also serves as a civil religion⁵⁹, to integrate (or to segregate), or to enable people from diverse backgrounds to identify with the state by using symbols and rituals to achieve national unity⁶⁰. Expressing a covenant between all living creatures, humankind and God, Tutu made of the 'rainbow' an exultant and global symbol for reconciliation and national harmony. In a comparable manner, and perhaps⁶¹ at the same time as Tutu's coining of the term, the 'rainbow' metaphor came to depict Mauritius as holding the same mystical tool - as the bearer of a covenant similar to that of South Africans' covenant with God and all other living creatures - to natural harmony: inhabitants of Mauritius are understood as capable of harmonising the diversities of the island whilst inhibiting *les prejuges de couleur*⁶² sustained during the colonial era and that take root from racial science⁶³ and white capitalist hegemony performed through the sustenance of social hierarchies of prestige. As suggests Malcolm de Chazal argues in the mid-1900s in his theory about racial harmony, the island is proof "that Asia and Europe, the East and the West are made to get along within divine humanism"⁶⁴, allowing reciprocal exchanges between the former Motherlands of India, Africa, France and England, and the island of Mauritius, and creating a nation that consequently militates against racism and racial prejudices – Mauritianism, or the "unity of all races."⁶⁵

Affirmed in official discourses to be a social miracle, a social paradise⁶⁶, Mauritius is a supposed testimony of perfect nationalism, Chazalian⁶⁷ nationalism, a fusion of migrant cultures⁶⁸ - a "new humanity"⁶⁹. The island is touted the "the Athens of the East and West

⁵⁹ Robert N. Bellah, the "discoverer" of the American civil religion defines civil religion as "a genuine apprehension of universal and transcendent religious reality as seen or, one could almost say, as revealed through the experience of the . . . people". See Bellah, R. N. (1967) *Civil Religion in America*. Daedalus. Vol. 96(3), p. 12

⁶⁰ Dickow, H., Møller, V. and Harris, M. (2002) *South Africa's 'Rainbow People', National Pride and Happiness*. Rhodes University

⁶¹ I say *perhaps*, as it is unclear when the term was first used to illustrate the Mauritian nation

⁶² Racial prejudices - based on skin colour

⁶³ Science that would explain why the white man is better than any other race

⁶⁴ de Chazal, M. (1961) quoted by the Observatoire Réunionnais des Arts, des Civilisations et des Littératures dans leur Environnement. Article available online at

http://laboratoires.univ-reunion.fr/oracle/documents/malcoml_chazal.html

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, http://laboratoires.univ-reunion.fr/oracle/documents/malcoml_chazal.html

⁶⁶ Refer to the writings of Thomas H. Eriksen, Malcolm de Chazal, etc...

⁶⁷ I refer to perfect nationalism, the perfect rainbow nation described by Malcolm de Chazal as *Chazalian nationalism*

⁶⁸ Reference to the concept of 'dark tourism'. See Seaton, A. (1996) *From Thanatopsis to Thanatourism: Guided by the Dark*. International Journal of Heritage Studies. Vol. 2, pp.234–244.

⁶⁹ de Chazal, M. (1961) quoted by the Observatoire Réunionnais des Arts, des Civilisations et des Littératures dans leur Environnement. Article available online at http://laboratoires.univ-reunion.fr/oracle/documents/malcoml_chazal.html

Indies Sea”⁷⁰, defying the racial categories of its colonial period and the related ways of identification, paving the way to “cultural creolisation”⁷¹, and allowing for such practices that “emphasise the organic connection between diaspora and metropole” whilst serving to “strengthen group cohesion within Mauritius [...]”⁷². Indeed, since all Mauritians are immigrants, all are supposed to have equal claim to the island and to therefore be part of the Mauritian nation. Because it is very small⁷³, the island only forces⁷⁴ the frequent interaction of diverse religious and ethnic groups in such spaces as schools, the workplace and the common areas of entertainment. Such interaction has also required the development and usage of a common language, that is, the Mauritian Creole. However, explains Bunwaree, “Creole, although spoken by one and all, is not the official language, nor the medium of instruction in schools. It is the language of everyday interaction but does not have an official status”⁷⁵.

“Mauritius is today squaring up to be one of the Indian Ocean’s most progressive and dynamic nations [...]”⁷⁶. But whilst the island’s shift in 1968 to a stable and successful economy is obvious, observable and is recognised around the globe, most accounts of the island’s social development into a unified multicultural nation are more modest, are more mystical, limited, and narrow, and seem archaic. Mauritianism (the Mauritian rainbow nation) is maintained as romantic, poetic, fantastic and even inexplicable. Does this almost-obsessive dedication of writers, tourists⁷⁷, and even politicians and scholars not fail in various ways in valorising a more complete, more informed, more contemporary and a more authentic history, evoking perhaps, a form of forgetfulness turned towards the future, as would suggest Arendt⁷⁸? Can the non-academic, the non-politically involved Mauritian populace truly testify to experiencing this “new humanity”, this Chazalian nationalism? Have, as would suggest the possibility of Chazalian nationalism, the pain and grief endured

⁷⁰ de Chazal. http://laboratoires.univ-reunion.fr/oracle/documents/malcoml_chazal.html

⁷¹ Eriksen, T.H. (1998) *Tu dimunn pu vini kreol: The Mauritian Creole and the Concept of Creolisation*. University of Oslo, p.2

⁷² *Ibid.*, p.15

⁷³ The Mauritian population consists of about a 1million and a few hundreds of thousands people

⁷⁴ In a positive manner

⁷⁵ Bunwaree, S. (2002) *Economics, Conflicts and Interculturality in a Small Island State: The Case of Mauritius*. Polis/RCPS/CPSR. Vol. 9, Special Issue, p.4

⁷⁶ Eriksen, T.H. (1998) *Tu dimunn pu vini kreol: The Mauritian Creole and the Concept of Creolisation*. University of Oslo, p.15

⁷⁷ Ethnicity has been identified as a commodity, especially in Mauritius. See Comaroff, J. & Comaroff, J. (2009) *Ethnicity Inc*. Chicago IL, University of Chicago Press.

⁷⁸ Arendt, H. (1968) ‘What is Freedom?’ In Arendt, H. *Between Past and Future*. London: Penguin Books. pp.143-171.

through of the brutalities and injustices of the catastrophe of slavery, deportation and colonialism in Mauritius been erased from national memory, if not from history⁷⁹? Is Mauritius truly described in its authentic, contemporary, scientific and complete form?

2.3. Everyday Experiences of Mauritians

The suggestion of a 'perfect nation' is proof of the persevering ignorance surrounding the socio-economic and political realities of the Mauritian nation. "[...] The classification of Mauritius on the top of the list does not necessarily mean that the country is immune from corruption and mal practices. Everyone in the country knows pretty well, and it is a fact, that corruption, nepotism and mal practices in government, private sector and civil society exist in the society."⁸⁰ Information about the modest success of the Mauritian state to creating the perfect nation is today very accessible and is constantly exposed by the Mauritian youth on such platforms as the social media, where they speak of "Ideas for a better MU"⁸¹ or of "*ENN SEL LEPEP ENN SEL VISION*"⁸² (One people, one vision). Others, frustrated, have written the manifesto "*SEKI NOU LE*"⁸³ (What we are calling for) proclaiming "*ARET ZWE EK NOU LAVENIR*"⁸⁴ (Stop playing with our future), to express their extensive list relating to socio-economic and changes in Mauritius and including some of the youth's aspirations: "We are calling for an all-encompassing and exclusive economic system which does not leave anybody lagging behind or in the gutter. We want the total eradication of poverty and the creation of opportunities for people to become self-sufficient. We call for the celebration and promotion of our cultural diversity and not use it as a divisive tool [...] We call for a stop to all funding of religious and sectarian groups – the so-called socio-cultural organisations – which poison relations amongst the Mauritian people and often try to influence the power that be in their decision-making. [...] We want an end to the reckless spending of public money, for example in funding costly official ceremonies which do not generate any tangible benefits

⁷⁹ Schmidt, R. P. and Patterson C. T. (eds. 1995) "Introduction: From Constructing to Making Alternative Histories", In Schmidt, R. P. and Patterson C. T. *Making Alternative Histories: The Practice of Archaeology and History in Non-Western Settings*. New Mexico: School of American Research Press. p. 1-5

⁸⁰ Suntoo, R. (2012) *Consolidation of the National Building in a Multi-Ethnic Society: The case of Mauritius*. University of Mauritius. RJSSM: Vol.1 (10), p.100.

Article available online at <http://www.theinternationaljournal.org> accessed on the 15th of August 2012

⁸¹ Ideas written by and for the Mauritian youth on the Facebook page "WANTED: 15,000 Youngsters to Save OUR Future" accessible at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/azirmaurice/?ref=ts&fref=ts>

⁸² Which means One people, One Vision, also found on the Facebook page: "WANTED: 15,000 Youngsters to Save OUR Future". See <https://www.facebook.com/groups/azirmaurice/?ref=ts&fref=ts>

⁸³ Which means "what we are calling for". Manifesto written in Creole by Noor Adam Essack on the 30th of August 2011

⁸⁴ Slogan in Creole, meaning "Stop playing with our future"

to the country and the population. We want ethical principles to permeate society as a whole, and end to corruption⁸⁵ and politico-financial scandals. [...] We want transparency everywhere with further consolidation of democracy and our fundamental freedoms (including Freedom of Expression, Freedom of the Media...) and the promulgation of a Freedom of Information Act [...]”⁸⁶. More ‘politically-mature’⁸⁷, *LALIT* (the fight), a Mauritian political party, often speaks to the cracks in the ‘rainbow nation’: they protest “Against Police Brutality”⁸⁸; they claim that “The Constitution must be amended”⁸⁹; and they explain how “disagreeing with the government or the party line can lead to serious trouble”⁹⁰, amongst other issues.

In the light of the contemporary Mauritian issues mentioned above, should the claim of a “new humanity” in Mauritius not be more mitigated than advertised? Could the Mauritian ‘rainbow nation’ not be less of an achieved circumstance and more of a myth? If the perfect Mauritian nation is a myth, one must understand that such notion relies heavily on faith⁹¹. Without dwelling too much into religious concepts - for the purpose of this thesis is not to analyse faith and divinities but to understand the blind, unchallenged and often unsubstantiated confidence in the rainbow nation - it is interesting to keep in mind throughout this thesis, Saint Augustine of Hippo’s famous line about blind faith: “Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward for this faith is to see what you believe”⁹². Following this logic, could it be that the maintenance and advertisement of the myth of the completed rainbow nation - this “new humanity” - affirms and legitimises its very own status as a completed

⁸⁵ See Reuters online article on “Mauritius youth protest against corruption” accessed in August 2011 and retrieved again on the 1st of February 2013 at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/10/ozatp-mauritius-protest-idAFJOE7890DF20110910>

⁸⁶ The manifesto is written as a list of 20 wishes by the Mauritian Youth. Description accessible online at <http://www.lemauricien.com/article/%C2%AB%C2%A0aret-zwe-ek-nou-lavenir%C2%A0%C2%BB-%E2%80%94%C2%AB%C2%A0wanted%C2%A0-15%C2%A0000%E2%80%A6%C2%A0%C2%BB-%E2%80%93-quel-potentiel%C2%A0> and <http://www.lemauricien.com/article/manifeste-%E2%80%98wanted-%E2%80%93-15000%E2%80%A6%E2%80%99> accessed in October 2011 again on the 1st of February 2013. See Appendix 1 for Manifesto provided by a friend of mine from Mauritius

⁸⁷ More mature than the Mauritian youth in politics

⁸⁸ Document published by LALIT on the 11th of June 2001 at <http://www.lalitmauritius.org/documents.php> accessed on the 15th of August 2011 and retrieved again on the 1st of February 2013

⁸⁹ Collen, L. (20 November 2005) *Il Faut Amender la Constitution*. Le Dimanche Newspaper. Press clipping accessible online at <http://www.lalitmauritius.org/resources/documentcentre/LPC12026.001.jpg>
See Appendix 2

⁹⁰ Valayden, D. (11 October 2005) *From Stalin With Love*. L’Express Newspaper. See Appendix 3. Press clipping accessible online at <http://www.lalitmauritius.org/resources/documentcentre/LPC12036.001.jpg> and <http://www.lalitmauritius.org/resources/documentcentre/LPC12036.002.jpg>

⁹¹ Especially with regards to believing in divinities without material proof of their existence

⁹² See Saint Augustine of Hippo on faith

social miracle? In other words, is the mere belief in Mauritian Chazalian nationalism not proposing its very own materiality? If many scholars suggest the idyll of the Mauritian nation, does it mean that it could very well be a fact? But who exactly can corroborate the possibility of the coveted Mauritianism? If the myth of the paradise Mauritian nation requires faith in its possibility, it follows that without such faith, the status of Mauritianness as an idyll may be untrue. This possibility, this materiality, then, would be one that resides mainly in the imaginaries of those who believe in its supposed existence, since it is based on limited analysis and seems to be sustained through faith mostly. Is it therefore not more appropriate to describe the idyllic Mauritian nation as a mere imagined community⁹³?

Despite the country's high rankings in world statistics, Mauritian nationalism is without doubt a matter more complicated than narrated in official (often archaic and euphoric) discourses. Unnoticeable to visitors and international scholars, Mauritianism is, contrary to myths and popular discourses, sought through a specific and long-term set of (mostly, but are not restricted to) political practices pertaining to the past and that allow for the negotiation of the various ethnic identities present on the island. Inhabitants of Mauritius remain for a long time bound to categories and identities that are located in a foreign Motherland, an "imaginary elsewhere" as suggests Bunwaree, referring to Dinan's remarks about Mauritians' sense of belonging to a foreign land: "Mauritians have cultivated to a high degree the feeling of belonging somewhere else"⁹⁴. But they also seem to eventually evolve – echoing the liberation movements of the 20th century in Africa and India - with surreal freedom from time and the reality bound to colonial hegemonic discourses. Slowly disconnecting their identity from their previous Motherland⁹⁵ - if not slowly disconnected from or abandoned by her, with time and distance - they seek to figure a sense of belonging that is different from pre-existing, white colonial representations of the self in Mauritius. It is during the liberation movements of the 20th century that oppressed citizens (and others, such as artists, poets or political aspirants⁹⁶) of Mauritius actively begin to build a new sense of belonging and identity, a composite identity based on their new commonality – that is, belonging to the rainbow nation

⁹³ Reference to Benedict Anderson's theory of the imagined community in Anderson, B. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso

⁹⁴ Dinan, M (1985) 'Maurice: Une île éclatée: Analyse de l'émigration mauricienne, 1960-1982. Mauritius best graphics', In Bunwaree, S. (2002) *Economics, Conflicts and Interculturality in a Small Island State: The Case of Mauritius*. Polis/RCPS/CPSR. Vol. 9, Special Issue

⁹⁵ Motherlands such as Africa, India, France and England

⁹⁶ Artists such as Chazal; poets such as Le Clezio; and political aspirants such as Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, and Duval, amongst many others

of Mauritius. They seek to re-imagine themselves, to re-begin and to break with the past so as to harmonise the diversities of the island. They revisit historical narratives and re-negotiate their identity. They seek to anchor their divergent memories and pasts on a land that they now claim theirs, and attempt to construct a local space to organising their diversity, and create the cohesive national as a means of nurturing a sense of national identification, inscribed into the local territory, and the imaginary. To this end, they find important to create a highly-vibrant Mauritian consciousness – Mauritianism, or what it could mean to be inhabitants of the island, free from the shackles of colonial discursive representations and myths.

2.3. The Good Old Humdrum of Mauritian nation-building

The development of the Mauritian nation begins in the form of pro-independence nationalism⁹⁷, and is enthusiastically enforced through the adage of unity to pave the way to forming a homogenous population composed of diverse groups united towards achieving self-rule, that is, towards being free from the ruling colonial government⁹⁸. Mauritian leaders then seek to impose policies of cultural conformity through which to attempt the creation of a cohesive and singular national identity, highlighted especially at Independence in 1968 and later on, in the 1970s and 1980s by the opposition party, the *Mouvement Militant Mauricien*⁹⁹ in their attempt to defining a unitary model for the nation based on the slogan “as one people, as one nation’ (*enn sel lepep, enn sel nation*)¹⁰⁰. Those who seek liberation do not pretend to progress against the “enemy of Europe”¹⁰¹ and do not prophesise to moving towards a world history in which the “importance of Europe”¹⁰² would be underestimated, as would suggest Aime Césaire in his *Discourse on Colonialism*¹⁰³. The political choices of the liberation leaders of the 20th century in Mauritius are bound to creating a population that is unified in its political progression: what is important is to find ways of achieving political similarity and homogeneity as a means to move towards a common future – a common memory, a future of invented traditions bound to the Mauritian land. Such events as the abolition of slavery (1st of February) and the arrival of Indian indentured labourers (2nd of November) are celebrated nation-wise to honour the work done by the latter and to give such events a national rather

⁹⁷ First wave of the development of Mauritianism

⁹⁸ Mauritius is a British colony until 1968

⁹⁹ Mauritian Militant Movement

¹⁰⁰ Phrase of the Mauritian national anthem

¹⁰¹ Césaire, A. (1972) *Discourse on Colonialism*. Trans. Joan Pinkham, New York, Monthly Review Press

¹⁰² *Ibid.*,

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*,

than an ethnic dimension¹⁰⁴. Such compromise is to bring citizens of the island together – to allow for unity, through tolerance of the ‘other’. At that point in the Mauritian history (in the early stages of nation-building), political leaders only seek to foster national unity - echoing the Mauritian mantra or adage “as one people, as one nation”¹⁰⁵.

Unfortunately, the Mauritianism of the 20th century proves as ephemeral as a rainbow. It is too difficult in various aspects and the principle of unity is not sustained for long on the island: the imposed cultural conformity denies certain groups to cultural expression¹⁰⁶. Furthermore, political leaders - the Indo-Mauritian freedom fighters (Princes¹⁰⁷) – seem to start to practise partisan politics in favour of the Indian diaspora, whose involvement in achieving Independence plebiscite Mauritian Hindus as political heroes whose identity is the strongest at the time of Independence. They become a sort of leader inspired by ‘greater heroes’, Princes from Mother India, whose duty is to look care and cater for their population, the Hindus. In this perspective, the Indo-Mauritian leaders become the ‘Indian Princes’ who ‘save’ Mauritius from the British oppressor, inspired by greater (comparably ‘kingly’) heroes of India. Because of their involvement in achieving Mauritian Independence, Princes not only mark a break with the Indian past, but also allow for the creation of a new, a stronger Hindu community of providers, property owners and politicians¹⁰⁸. Due to the fact that the Indian Diaspora is the majority ethnic group on the island, they face, at the time of Independence, a relatively accommodating political sphere that allows them to appropriate the Mauritian land as an economic marker: it becomes a financial necessity, and a social investment. Princes create or re-create their own image, perfecting the Mauritian landscapes to their advantage, and reconciling their past with their present, but in turn, contradict the possibility of the Chazalian ideal of unity and collective memory-making based on a new Motherland that ought to belong to all in post-independent Mauritius. Princes’ sense of socio-economic and political ‘superiority’ is however instantaneously challenged, and so is their imposition of a

¹⁰⁴ The abolition of slavery and the arrival of the first Indian migrants are historical events celebrated on the by all in Mauritius

¹⁰⁵ Phrase of the Mauritian national anthem

¹⁰⁶ Creoles, for instance, remain at the periphery of the shifting socio-economic and political spheres of Mauritius in the 1900s, whilst Hindus become powerful.

¹⁰⁷ Analogy to describe Mauritian leaders of the Indian Diaspora - Mauritian Princes - who ‘saved’ Mauritius from the British oppressor, inspired by greater, comparably ‘Kingly’ heroes of India such as Gandhi, Nehru and Tagore

¹⁰⁸ Carter, M. and Ng Foong Kwang, J. (1997) *Forging the Rainbow Nation: Labour Immigrants in British Mauritius*. Mauritius, Alfran Co. p.32

form of 'Hindu-led' cultural conformity, which the distinct and diverse cultural and ethnic groups of Mauritius do not wish to assimilate.

Unhappy with the enforcement of unity and its related partisan politics, anti-independentists¹⁰⁹ – those who willingly chose not to participate in achieving Independence and the marginal communities such as the Creole community¹¹⁰ (who are as marginalised and unrecognised as the Creole language itself, and for reasons that stem from the era of colonialism, where the racial category of the Creole was maintained as that of the subaltern, the slave) - dispute Hindu hegemony¹¹¹ and the threat of assimilation into what seems, at the time¹¹², to become Little India (that is the fierce political enforcement, reproduction and reconstruction of Indian life, aspirations and imaginations by Princes in independent Mauritius). Princes, seemingly aware of the contradiction of the first adage, and fearful of exhausting their newly-gained political legitimacy, then adopt a second motto, that of diversity. It is advertised as Mauritian multicultural nationalism, a form of cultural mosaic that rejects the dogmatic nationalist idea that people ought to be culturally similar when in the same state. Mauritians, in diversity, do not have to form a cohesive group anymore as would want the first adage of unity (against a common enemy) or even share the same memories. Instead, Mauritian Princes encourage divisions where cultural, religious, linguistic and political differences are allowed, sacrificing popular unity and memory for the benefit and recognition of all groups and traditions. It becomes natural for Mauritians to act out their different identities¹¹³, thence affirming the cultural phenomenon of belonging to a specific group¹¹⁴. They build more temples, churches and pagodas, create associations and celebrate festivals that originate from their motherlands as a means of building cultural institutions that would support their culturally-bound ways and modes of identification. The Hindus, for example, would thence be able to recreate the village system and such 'Indian' patterns that allow for the caste system, festivals¹¹⁵ and Indian traditions that facilitate the propagation of

¹⁰⁹ Such as those political parties led by Duval etc...

¹¹⁰ Refer to the works of Eriksen, 1998; Selvon, 2005, who explain that the Creole community has traditionally been under-represented in Mauritian politics, if not in other spheres as well.

¹¹¹ Refer to Eisenlohr, 2006

¹¹² In the 1950s and 1960s especially, with the rise of Hindus to political power

¹¹³ Clothey, F. W. (1983) Clothey, F.W.: *Rhythm and Intent: Ritual Studies from South India*. Blackie and Son, Bombay p. 196

¹¹⁴ Nadarajah, M. (1994) *Diaspora and nostalgia: Towards a Semiotic Theory of the Indian Diaspora*. International Conference on Indian Diaspora. University of Hyderabad. pp. 1-33

¹¹⁵ Festivals such as *Maha Shivaratree*, in which Hindu devotees dress in white in the month of February, carry a *kanwar* (wooden) in pilgrimage to the Ganga Talao, the Grand Bassin, reminiscent of the great pilgrimages at the banks of the Ganges River. Other events, such as *Diwali*, which is the festival of light, celebrated at the end

ancestral Indian culture. This second discourse - and second developmental stage of Mauritianism - proposes a post-independent¹¹⁶ movement to interracial peace, harmony, forgiveness, progression and modernisation, acclaimed as an African success story, a true rainbow nation - a true Chazalian nationalism, one that can indeed serve as example to all the other African states that have are unable to move on from a violent past towards building a common future, towards building a nation. All diasporas are to be represented in Mauritian politics and are to be confirmed as 'equal' citizens who - now able to act out their cultural differences and able to preserve their distinct modes of identification.

But this adage is, in time, negated and disputed by the Mauritian 'general population'¹¹⁷ as it proves too complex and too divisive an adage, and supports various colonial-type inequalities on the island. Mauritius, despite this new attempt at bringing cohesion, remains a dysfunctional nation made up of other smaller disunited nations. Because of the inadequacy and the feature of hyper-essentialism of the first two attempts - as suggest various popular riots and instances of political turbulence¹¹⁸ that are to occur on the island following Independence in 1968 - a third is devised, through which the incomplete and contradictory first and second adages are to be reconciled in order to preach the virtues of unity in diversity or unity in disunity. A national process of demonstrating, commemorating and publicising begins to implicate itself in practices of memorialisation and history-making in order to create a secular and generalised history and a collective memory - to create a historically- and geographically-bound nation. The principle of unity in disunity functions at all levels of the nation, and recognises the existence of group specificities in terms of language, culture, religion and political affiliations, amongst other elements. Citizens of Mauritius are said, at that time, to be allowed equal rights, living in a free, democratic and secular state¹¹⁹. But whilst all Mauritians are allowed to adhere to specific ethnic and cultural traditions, they also have to have something in common so as to be unified in disunity, and thence to constitute a nation. Seeking to promote unity without having to synthesise the various cultures that exist

of October, or in November, marks the victory of the god Rama over Ravana, and commemorated Krishna's destruction of the demon Narakusuran. Earthoil lamps are placed in front of all Hindu homes, turning Mauritius into a 'fairy-tale' of lights, are celebrated

¹¹⁶ Mauritius achieves Independence in 1968

¹¹⁷ The term *general population* is widely used in Mauritian politics to refer to those with no political power, with limited opportunities, those that are not at the top of the Mauritian hierarchical ladder

¹¹⁸ As is the case of the violent civil unrest in 1999 that occurs after and because of the mysterious death of the Creole *Seggae* singer Kaya: See Vellien, C. (February 1999) *Rioting in Mauritius set off by Jail Death of Singer*. The Guardian (UK), 25. Article accessible at www.guardian.co.uk/world/1999/feb/25/7

¹¹⁹ Vellien, C. (February 1999) *Rioting in Mauritius set off by Jail Death of Singer*. The Guardian (UK), 25. Article accessible at www.guardian.co.uk/world/1999/feb/25/7

in Mauritius, state leaders (Princes) exploit the large history of migration, slavery and indentured labour, capitalist expansion, to create a singular cultural capital encouraged through a long process of national reconciliation. Such a process, necessary to controlling mechanisms of racial integration becomes, in the 21st century, the central adage of national construction in Mauritius.

In 2008¹²⁰, the Mauritian Government begins its process of creating a common platform, a singular Chazalian cultural capital based on the third adage of unity in disunity – Chazalian nationalism - through the enforcement of a Truth and Justice Commission (TJC). Not yet the African success story that it has been advertised as, in that it has still not been able to undo the wrongs committed during the era of colonialism, the Mauritian state of the 21st century imposes the institutional discourse of truth-recovery to expose the true and singular Mauritian history.¹²¹ Through the TJC, the state seeks to examine more than 300 years of human rights violations and abuses, and the legacy of slavery and indenture in Mauritius, whilst being responsible for determining appropriate measures to be extended to descendants of slaves and indentured labourers. After investigating the Mauritian past, the TJC generates a singular narrative truth about the systematic abuse and gross violations of human rights that had occurred during the colonial era, collectivising guilt by accusing all and naming none, as if Mauritian citizens were a coherent community that shared collective memories and responsibility for the abuses that occurred under slavery and indenture. The TJC report does not limit itself to the usual discourse of ‘white guilt’, but further concludes to having to accuse all Mauritian collectivities of Indians financiers, Arab traders, and chiefs of African kingdoms of participating in the human rights abuses of the era of slavery and colonialism: “...Africans, Arabs and Indians [were] involved in the process of capture and internal selling, before slaves embarked at the ports of the exportation.” Guilt about the Mauritian past, after the final Reports of the TJC, has to be equally shared by all those who partook in systematic abuse during slavery and indenture¹²² and becomes, through the findings of the TJC, national – it becomes the guilt of a nation, a new way of imagining the Mauritian nation. Is the possibility of a Truth and Justice Commission not further proof of an unfinished (or not yet existent paradise or rainbow) nation and the related mystical healing of colonialism and its

¹²⁰ Officially, 2008 marked the beginning of various processes that would lead to a Mauritian Truth Commission, but talks about such a tool of political justice and transition would have probably started before 2008.

¹²¹ TJC Report (2011) Vol.1

¹²² TJC Report (2011) Vol.1, p.77

legacies? Are the very possibility, necessity and enforcement of this truth-seeking institution in present-day Mauritius not evidence of the island's ongoing pursuit of Chazalian nationalism? And what does this enforcement suggest of political leaders in Mauritius? Why do they actively seek to maintain the idyll of the Mauritian ethnography¹²³? Furthermore, if Princes have opted for a TJC - a paradigmatic international and common African model of how to heal the nation¹²⁴, and more importantly, how to build and sustain one – are they not, in various ways seeking to implement a set of discourses that could create a platform that sustains and reinforces nation-building in a divided post-independent state¹²⁵? Is the hypothetical, 'completed rainbow nation' and its development - praised by many¹²⁶, and that is envied by those larger nations that have not yet made their multicultural origins a socio-economic asset towards progress and prosperity – not more nuanced and complex than described in official discourses?

Is it adequate to advertise Mauritius as an ethnographic and socio-political idyll if there are, since – if not even before – the achievement of the Mauritian Independence, obvious tensions and longstanding ethnic conflicts between the different communities? There is, as suggest various uprisings¹²⁷ by significant sections of its population - revolting against state authorities¹²⁸ and condoning racial politics, and the rise of communalism in the island - an ongoing ethnic unrest in Mauritius. Therefore, the claim to the 'peaceful rainbow nation' is erroneous. For instance, many, if not all Mauritian politicians – who are for the majority, of Indian origin – practise what Haralambos and Holborn term "manipulative ethnicity"¹²⁹ by aligning with specific religious and ethnic groups, often using the platform of religious festivals and gatherings to campaign for their political party and promoting the notion that their party and specific religious group hold similar concerns¹³⁰, which are thence assumed to differ from other groups and create a politico-racial divide amongst groups. The political

¹²³ A point that will be developed later, which will suggest that ethnicity has become a commodity widely used to promote Mauritius to tourists.

¹²⁴ By healing it

¹²⁵ As may have done other states when setting up other Truth Commissions See Heidi Grunebaum's extensive work on the South African Truth Commission.

¹²⁶ International politicians, for instance, whose insight remains limited and dissonant to the local experience

¹²⁷ Starting even before Independence and that are ongoing in Mauritius, highlighted through the Creole community's constant outcry for equality on the island.

¹²⁸ Uprisings highlighted by riots such as those of 1999 following the death of *seggae* singer Kaya, a Creole, when in police custody.

¹²⁹ Haralambos, M. and Holborn, M. (2000) *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*. HarperCollins, London

¹³⁰ Various politicians attend festivals and gatherings to make speeches that are related to their political affiliation and party

community further perpetuates, along with the community of Franco-Mauritians - Mauritian descendants of French settlers – the institutionalisation of communal identities in various sectors and the monopolisation of political and economic power, which create tension and raise concerns about the distribution of resources and opportunities to those outside the powerful groups. As suggests Rose Boswell's *Le Malaise Creole*¹³¹, there is a lack of opportunity, restricted access to resources and an under-representation of the Creole community in the politico-economic spheres in Mauritius that Thomas Hyllard Eriksen explains, "can be traced back to the social conditions under slavery, when family and kinship systems were destroyed, individual freedom emerged as the paramount value, and social relations were individualized and became contractual in nature. In the contemporary context of a democratic, competitive capitalist society, the Creoles are at a clear disadvantage because of their loose social organization and their relative lack of symbolic capital in Mauritian identity politics"¹³². Such minority group remains marginalised, creating resentment between communities whereby some (the politico-economic leaders) reject the equal sharing of resources and others (such as the Creoles) demand it - an antic that in turn threatens and undermines the development of a peaceful population¹³³.

2.4. Conclusion

Mauritius, which today ranks at the highest economic levels in Africa, has proven to building and sustaining a successful and stable economy where other African countries have failed. However, whilst the economic success of the island is obvious, its status as a 'completed rainbow nation' is debatable. One cannot claim the island to be an African social success story if its ruling social and politico-economic elite is said to undermine the opportunities and rights of sections of the population, to practise partisan politics and to struggle at maintaining peace. Mauritianism remains an ephemeral phenomenon, an unachieved circumstance that has been attempted through various short-lived waves and that is still being developed through an incessant and ongoing process of trial-and-error. Hopefully such processes will one day influence and shape a definitive national consciousness, but until then, one must understand that thus far, Mauritianism is unduly revered in global discourses and strategies,

¹³¹ The Creole unrest or ailment. See Boswell, R. (2006) *Le Malaise Créole: Ethnic Identity in Mauritius*. New York, Berghahn

¹³² Eriksen, T.H. (1989) *Communicating Cultural Difference and Identity: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Mauritius*. Oslo: University of Oslo Press. Occasional Papers in Social Anthropology, Vol. 16
 edited by Charles C Stewart Left Coast Press, 31 Mar 2007

¹³³ Ethnic unrest that will start even before the achievement of Independence in 1968.

and that the enthusiastic usage of the metaphor of the ‘rainbow nation’ erases local Mauritian experiences from official discourses.

Chapter 3: Review of Nationalism Literature Relevant to Mauritius

In view of a framework within which to appreciate Mauritian nationalism, I elaborate on the nation-building processes and the types of nationalisms that are attempted to psychologise and homogenise diverse groups in plural societies, and to create in them the desire to becoming a nation - to share a common mode of identification and to feel bound to a motherland. There are, as suggested in this chapter, various types of nationalisms, the quintessence of which is, in Africa, anti-colonial or anti-imperial nationalism. This form of nationalism is the expression of a struggle against the denial of human dignity and is a first attempt by Africans to achieving self-rule and self-determination. Through this attempt to 'humanising' all individuals, distinct cultural groups are expected to have equal right to self-determination, respect and recognition. However, because anti-colonial nationalism and the wish to forging comradeship and a common sense of belonging in disparate communities also serves to create a nation where it does not exist¹³⁴, it often proves ineffective or inadequate.

3.1. Introducing Nations and Nationalisms

"-But do you know what a nation means? says John Wyse.

-Yes, says Bloom.

-What is it? says John Wyse.

-A nation? says Bloom. A nation is the same people living in the same place.

-By God, then, says Ned, laughing, if that's so I'm a nation for I'm living in the same place for the past five years.

So of course everyone had a laugh at Bloom and says he, trying to muck out of it:

-Or also living in different places.

-That covers my case, says Joe.

-What is your nation if I may ask, says the citizen.

-Ireland, says Bloom. I was born here. Ireland."¹³⁵

Nations and nationalism are multifaceted, are often associated with such grand historical acts as revolutions and ethnic wars, and their meanings often differ from country to country and from one continent to another, suggesting the complexity of the terms and the difficulty in reaching a common, normative explanation of both phenomena. Yet, it seems possible to

¹³⁴ By encouraging the development of a local 'soul' and consciousness, it often

¹³⁵ Joyce, J. (1984 [1922]) *Ulysses*. pp.329-30

narrowing the various accounts given by scholars and historians, so as to formulate a working definition of the two phenomena that is meaningful to all. Based on a literary survey of the most appreciated texts and explanations of those concepts, this chapter proposes that although understood in various ways, nationalism seems to remain¹³⁶ - in all texts and to almost all scholars and historians, amongst others who have sought to explain the concept - linked to a population bound to a motherland. It is a mobilising force; it is often elite-driven; and is a concept that stimulates the masses. This basic definition is crucial to understanding and explaining Mauritianism and its development, that is, the ongoing process(es) of nationalism and nation-building in Mauritius, as well as the related challenges to achieving Chazalian nationalism.

On the 11th of March 1882, well-known French historian Ernest Renan, in a lecture delivered at La Sorbonne, asked and answered the question, “What is a nation?”¹³⁷ He begins by explaining that the narrative produced through the “great laws of the history of Western Europe”¹³⁸ that nations are made by race, religion, language, commerce or borders is unfounded and even incorrect. Many nations, he notes, do not share a common language, race or religion. Instead, he adds, they are characterised by the mixture of various populations sharing a rich heritage, a “rich legacy of memories”¹³⁹, as well as their consent to be together. People who “share the desire to continue to live together to maintain this heritage”¹⁴⁰ then assume a “soul”, a “moral conscience” that produces an aggregate of wills constructed through a particular history - in which “the past and the present are linked in one collective group...it is a two-dimensional group, operating simultaneously in the past and the present.”¹⁴¹ The soul of the nation – a collective act that puts the benefit of the group above that of the individual – further becomes source of national identity, and allows for the inclusion of the national self and the exclusion of the non-national other. Thus, a common heritage and the memory of a common past are crucial to the formation of a nation - that is, to constructing the beliefs and perceptions that help forge a national identity and that are further institutionalised by the nation-state. Renan adds that “the essence of a nation is that all its

¹³⁶ See Charles Tilly, Rogers Brubaker, Benedict Anderson, Ernest Geller, Pierre Bourdieu have

¹³⁷ Renan, E. (11 March 1882) *What is a Nation?* Lecture delivered at La Sorbonne University. Available at http://www.cooper.edu/humanities/classes/coreclasses/hss3/e_renan.html

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*,

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*,

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*,

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*,

people have a great deal in common, and also, that they have forgotten a great deal”¹⁴². No French citizen, explains Renan, could tell if they are Burgundian, Alain or Visigoth in origin as they were all required to have all forgotten the Protestant massacres of the Middle Ages, that is, to forget their past.¹⁴³ Negotiating memory and history needs to be a collective process for the creation of a nation: peoples, large enough to be thought of as nations, must make memory together, says Renan, and form “a spiritual principle” that arises from “the culmination of a long past of endeavours, sacrifice, and devotion.”¹⁴⁴ To form a nation, peoples must then have suffered and forgotten together. In explaining that it is this unifying act that allows the possibility and existence of the nation, Renan establishes the criterion for a first objective definition of what the nation is and how nationalism comes about.

Contrary to Renan, the modernist intellectual, Ernest Gellner, proposes an analysis of the subjective nature of the nation and nationalism, and the historical role that it plays. Writing about the two concepts, Gellner argues - in his highly prolific work on the rise of nations and the phenomenon of nationalism - for the centrality, ubiquity and durability of nationalism in interpreting the modern world. He starts by explaining nationalism as “a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent”¹⁴⁵. He adds that the nation is also a historical phenomenon that is caused by changing modes of production: nations and nationalism are phenomena that do not extend beyond the era of capitalism, industrialisation and the related political changes. With the advent of industrialisation, he explains, the old agrarian order breaks down and allows for both spatial and social mobility, at which point the agrarian population moves to urbanising or developing areas in search of better jobs. What Gellner calls a “high culture”¹⁴⁶ is then created, as industrialisation and the division of labour accelerate and require that a common platform for mobile populations be created through shared language and a uniform education, protected by and provided by the state. The education required to sustain this mobile society becomes the key to nationalism as it “creates the common culture and social homogeneity needed for the complex and constantly changing division of labour in modern societies.”¹⁴⁷ While this “high culture” permits nationalist assimilation, the state, he adds, becomes the agency that has the control of

¹⁴² Renan, E. (11 March 1882) *What is a Nation?* Lecture delivered at La Sorbonne University. Available at http://www.cooper.edu/humanities/classes/coreclasses/hss3/e_renan.html

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*,

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*,

¹⁴⁵ Gellner, E. (1983) *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford, UK, Blackwell. p.5

¹⁴⁶ Gellner, E. (1983) *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford, UK, Blackwell

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*,

legitimate violence, and whose primary job is - especially in a society with a “mobile division of labour”¹⁴⁸ - to maintain harmony and order, and to prevent private violence. To this end, he explains, “ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones”¹⁴⁹, and any violation of the principle of secularism is to be resolved by authority. Gellner’s work is crucial in understanding the secular, industrial, urbanised, bureaucratic and modern nation-state and its need to being politically and nationally legitimate and congruent to all. But he also dwells on a crucial point, that is, the complexity and temporality of the phenomenon, insisting that there is not one typology of nationalism, but many, and that each is the product of the advent of modernity and the necessary outcome of a specific culture, group, need and social structure, bound by time and context.¹⁵⁰

Adding to the discourse about the rise of nations and the phenomenon of nationalism, Anthony Smith, an ethnicist, explains when attempting to modify Gellner’s modernist position, that nationalism does in fact have roots that pre-date the era of industrialisation and that the phenomenon started with earlier groups. Even if nations are a modern phenomenon, Smith explains that their origins can be traced to early *ethnies* – earlier human populations that share ancestry myths, culture and history geographically bound and dependent upon a sense of solidarity.¹⁵¹ Studying the ethnic roots of the modern nation and seeking to find links between earlier forms of cohesive communities of the pre-modern era and nations of the modern, industrialising world, Smith concludes to pre-modern *ethnies* holding “striking parallels to the ‘modern’ idea of national identity and character.”¹⁵² He finds, whilst studying the attitudes, perceptions and sentiments of ethnic groups as they appear in “myths, memories, values and symbols”¹⁵³, a pre-modern typology of the nation, a form that Gellner does not recognise – the ethnic foundations of modern nations. It is this mythic and symbolic essence of ethnicity, says Smith, that characterises populations and their cohesive culture: “What I shall be arguing is that the ‘core’ of ethnicity, as it has been transmitted in the historical record and as it shapes individual experience, resides in this quartet of ‘myths, memories, values and symbols’¹⁵⁴, and in the characteristic forms or styles and genres of

¹⁴⁸ Gellner, E. (1983) *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford, UK, Blackwell. p.34

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p1

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*,

¹⁵¹ Smith, A.D. (1986) *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p.15

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.15

¹⁵⁴ Symbols such as a national flag, hailed globally for representing the new political dispensation that may bring along unity in a diverse society

certain historical configurations of populations.”¹⁵⁵ Contrary to Gellner, Smith argues that it is not demographic change (involving spatial mobility) that influences the formation of the nation. Instead, it is cultural changes (myth, memories, values and symbols making and breaking towards achieving cultural commonality) that explain the temporal and spatial possibility of a cohesive group, their common fate and influence. Of course, says Smith, the myths and history of an ethnic group are not always and necessarily true, but if they are adhered to, they can function to integrate and sustain that group as a cohesive entity: “What matters, then, is not the authenticity of the historical record, much less any attempt at ‘objective’ methods of historicising, but the poetic, didactic and integrative purposes which that record is felt to disclose.”¹⁵⁶

Following Smith’s footsteps, Benedict Anderson writes in the late 20th century, that nationalism “has to be understood by aligning it...with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which – as well as against which – it came into being.”¹⁵⁷ Anderson however moves away from Smith’s ‘ethnic communities’ - as he does from Gellner’s ‘political principle’ - and focuses on such cultural systems as religious communities and dynastic realms. He explains that because of historic changes in religious power – in religion, sacred communities, sacral languages and other religious possibilities as the concept of lineage relationships – people have been able to form relationships that are more lateral and less hierarchical. In simple terms, the breakdown of social order based on the sacred allows for people to imagine themselves as a community, unlinked from cosmology and ontological truth: “Beneath the decline of sacred communities, languages and lineages, a fundamental change was taking place in modes of apprehending the world, which, more than anything else, made it possible to ‘think’ the nation.”¹⁵⁸ Closely related to the possibility of language as detached from religion is the advent of print capitalism, in the 15th century.¹⁵⁹ Through the usage of the print media, the reading public, says Anderson, is able to enjoy the same novels and read the same newspapers at the same time and unites, imagining itself as a larger community of readers connected through language. The reading public then becomes this community whose members are capable of “inhabiting the same social world sharing a “deep

¹⁵⁵ Smith, A.D. (1986) *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell. p.15

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.15

¹⁵⁷ Anderson, B. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso. p.19

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.28

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.28

horizontal' comradeship"¹⁶⁰. Theorising about the "imagined community"¹⁶¹, Anderson makes it clear that people's sense of commonality and communality is crafted in the minds of people: it cannot be reduced to simpler notions of a shared political history, political system, customs, language, myth and, in some cases, religion. It is individuals' perception, their modes of representation and the individuals themselves that play a crucial role in bringing people together, and impart a sense of belonging to a nation. This sense of belonging to a national group is a social construction through which people imagine their self and selves in order to feel that they belong together¹⁶². They share and accept a common history¹⁶³ accompanied by invented traditions¹⁶⁴ and the reproduction of banal practices that facilitate national integration and identification, especially because they have nothing else in common that may promulgate a sense of belonging, that is the sense of nationalism highlighted at such moments as Olympic competitions, suggests Billig¹⁶⁵. Nations, following Anderson's logic, therefore exist because they are imagined, because they are crafted.

3.2. Types of Nationalisms

Gellner suggests that we ought to understand not only the meaning(s) of the nation, but its complexities, its different realities, forms, causes and consequences onto people: there exist various types of nationalisms¹⁶⁶. Some, such as Liberal Nationalism, are progressive and liberating, offering the prospect of independence and unity. Liberal nationalism is based on the assumption that humankind is naturally divided into collectivities and that each possesses a unique and separate identity, and that nations therefore, are organic and genuine.¹⁶⁷ This principled version¹⁶⁸ of nationalism further upholds that each nation has the right to self-determination and equality, and that all nations are equal. Therefore, liberal nationalism claims to the construction of a world comprised of sovereign states, where the interests of one nation are never to be upheld against those of another nation: nationalism is, according to

¹⁶⁰ Anderson, B. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso. p.16

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*,

¹⁶² Hobsbawm, E. and Ranger, T. (eds., 1983) *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*,

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*,

¹⁶⁵ Billig, M. (1995) *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*,

¹⁶⁷ Literature on this theory

¹⁶⁸ A version that has been deemed naïve and misguided by many

Liberals, a means of securing worldwide peace¹⁶⁹. Another type of nationalism – conservative nationalism – is that which is irrational or reactionary, a form that is quite contrary to that proposed by Liberals, and whereby politicians conduct policies of military expansion and war in order to further their nation¹⁷⁰. Conservative nationalism is concerned with such things as localised social cohesion and public order. It is an insular, inward-looking sentiment of patriotism that develops in established nation-states rather than those in political transition or undergoing the process of nation-building¹⁷¹. Critics affirm that this variety of nationalism is essentially a form of elite manipulation through which a formal identity is internalised and institutionalised, often as a necessary component of developing societies to replacing proto-nationalism (a loose form of ethnic or religious culture) with a congruent super-culture. In this light, such interrelated concepts as “boundaries, indivisibility, sovereignty, legitimacy conferred by conformity with the interests of the people, popular mobilisation and participation, direct individual membership, common culture, historic depth, common descent and territoriality”¹⁷² form a set of assumptions that confer a new reality or new realities upon groups of people. But nationalist feelings may easily turn into fanaticism, conflict and absurdity, when individuals start imagining themselves as belonging to a special or naturally superior community, causing such feelings as pathological ethnocentrism – xenophobia – clearly exemplified in such cases as European expansion and colonial conquest, and the xenophobic attacks that occurred in 2008, in South Africa.¹⁷³

Expansionist nationalism, another form of nationalism, is an aggressive and militaristic endeavour provoked often by imperial conquest and that imagines non-European nations are as the ‘other’ – that which is not ‘us’, that deficient entity that is what Europe is not. European identities are pinned as superior to that of ‘animals’ and create a clear Manichean division between coloniser and colonised, a script that is reflective of a European act of self-preservation. In this light, the expansionist nation strengthens its own identity and sense of belonging against that of the other – it is a form of negative integration locked in perpetual binary opposition. As argues Paul Landau, “[...] the history of the European view of non-

¹⁶⁹ Which is a debatable statement, especially in light of all those wars carried out against ethnic and cultural or national groups such as those carried out to conquer territories and enslave peoples.

¹⁷⁰ Abizadeh, A. (2004) *Liberal Nationalism versus Postnational Social Integration: On the Nation's Ethno-Cultural Popularity and 'Concreteness'*. Nations and Nationalism. Vol. 10, pp.231-250

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*,

¹⁷² Calhoun, C. (1997) *Nationalism*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press, p.4-5

¹⁷³ Newspapers

European peoples has always reflected Europeans' history of imaging themselves."¹⁷⁴ Africa is constructed, at the time of European expansionism, in such ways that suggest it is confronted with the possibility of self-annihilation, unless the West comes to its rescue. Africa is believed to become more effective if under the white man's protectorate, and conquering the dark continent is in actual fact, a religious, commercial and civilising 'favour' to the native¹⁷⁵. But expansionist nationalism conceals bitter truths: colonies are exploitative, destructive, humiliating, dehumanising, oppressive and violent. African cultures are negated and denigrated; land is confiscated by European immigrant farmers; and Africans are forced into cheap or slave labour.

Frustrated with expansionist nationalism, its violence and limitations, the intellectually- and politically trained African elite endorse anti-colonial nationalist doctrines and the principles necessary for the oppressed masses to come together and attempt to preserve their indigenous identities: it is a process of decolonisation of the African mind and space. The African elite seek to destabilise, if not destroy the intellectual, social, economic, political and linguistic structures that support Western power in the colonised country and that are capable of distributing and controlling knowledge and resources. The African masses – whom Spivak would call the "subaltern"¹⁷⁶ – seek for their voice to be heard, their ways to be recognised, and their identity to be reflective of who they want to be, and who were before colonialism. It is such emancipating nationalism that sustains the masses' common desire for national liberation in Africa.¹⁷⁷ Perhaps as interesting as anti-colonial nationalism in Africa (which ought to allow for the development of the free, post-colonial state by contesting colonial discourses, power structures and hierarchies¹⁷⁸) is that of attempts to upholding post-independence multicultural nationalism, where cultural diversity arises from the existence of various groups whose "myths, memories, values and symbols"¹⁷⁹ are integrated to generate an all-encompassing supra-identity. In such a society - usually created through the colonial instances of mass migration, slave trade and indentured labour – a form of political correctness is expected and enforced as the most natural way of sustaining the moral fibre

¹⁷⁴ Landau, P. (2002) 'Introduction: An Amazing Distance: Pictures and People in Africa,' in Landau, P.S. and Kaspin D (eds) *Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press. p.2

¹⁷⁵ Livingston, D. (1868) *Christianity, Commerce and Civilisation*. Princeton University Library

¹⁷⁶ Spivak, G. See Chakrabarty as well

¹⁷⁷ Extensively theorised by Frantz Fanon

¹⁷⁸ Gilbert, H. and Tompkins, J. (1996) *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics*, Routledge.

¹⁷⁹ Smith, A.D. (1986) *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell. p.15

and cultural diversity of all. Distinct cultural groups are expected to have equal right to self-determination, respect and recognition. In a similar fashion, certain transitioning multicultural countries are purposefully and politically re-imagined as holding the potential to becoming “a truly united, democratic and prosperous” post-colonial state¹⁸⁰, a state composed of the “rainbow people of God.”¹⁸¹ The (myth¹⁸² of the) united community, emerging only as a reaction or resentment against imperial domination, says Eric Hobsbawm, however serves ineffectively to create a nation where it does not exist, to “fill the emotional void left by the retreat or disintegration...of real human communities”¹⁸³. However ineffective, the imagined community often persists through time and generations, suggesting as explains Renan, a human desire to live together and to establish relationships and continuity, “between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are yet to be born.”¹⁸⁴

3.3. Problems Associated with Nationalism

Unfortunately, despite persisting attempts to living together, it is very common that internal pressures emerging from the presence of distinct ethnicities cause conflict and instability in such multicultural societies. Because those groups that live together are not automatically and naturally homogenous, they tend to dispute the imposition of cultural conformity and the creation of a cohesive and singular national identity that denies them the right to express their cultural differences and interests: any state possessing an extremely opulent cultural diversity and a seemingly never-ending list of personal identifications is often a challenge to social unity and cohesion¹⁸⁵, as is the case in such countries as Rwanda that suffer ethnic fractionalisation, where one group (Tutsi) appealed to their group identity as the basis for mobilising against another group (Hutu), leading to the catastrophe of the Hutu-Tutsi genocide, in 1994. It has been suggested, to avoid such identity-based fractionalisation, that groups forge a collective psyche that supersedes the possibility of multiple identities and

¹⁸⁰ ANC 2007

¹⁸¹ Dickow, Møller and Harris quoting Archbishop Desmond Tutu’s famous line from 1994 in Dickow, H., Møller, V. and Harris, M. (2002) *South Africa’s ‘Rainbow People’, National Pride and Happiness*. Rhodes University

¹⁸² Hobsbawm, E. and Ranger, T. (eds., 1992) *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*,

¹⁸⁴ Burke, P. (1989) ‘History and Social Memory’, In Butler, T. *Memory: History, Culture and the Mind*. New York: Blackwell Publishers. pp. 97-113

¹⁸⁵ Examples of multicultural states that are still trying to forge a rainbow nation are such countries as South Africa, or those that suffered massacres such as Rwanda

modes of identification. Taking their cue from the French sociologist, Maurice Halbwachs¹⁸⁶, many scholars have come to explain memory as a social activity, an expression and the binding force of collective identity¹⁸⁷. As Edward Said argues, many now “look to this refashioned memory, especially in its collective forms, to give themselves a coherent identity, a national narrative, a place in the world”¹⁸⁸, especially when referring to notions of national memory, collective memory, social memory, public memory, historical memory, popular memory, or cultural memory. Reflective of the surging academic interest in memory, the concern with the retrieval and understanding of a specifically desirable past - usually a recoverable one - has arisen, as Said explains, at a time of competing nationalisms and the decreasing efficacy of religious, familial and political bonds¹⁸⁹.

Supporting Said's claims, other scholars such as Pierre Nora¹⁹⁰, Anthony Giddens¹⁹¹ and Eric Hobsbawm¹⁹² describe periods of rapid transformation as accompanied by moments of intense collective remembering: those seem to be periods of social memory production. The collective psyche, usually engineered through the process of carrying the memories of the past into the collective present, allows for the individual understands his or her ‘self’, and how, when and where he or she ‘fits in’ into the larger collective framework or collective history: the individual is able to combine the past, the present and the future and unify his or her life through time and space¹⁹³. Such a framework, says Pierre Nora, can be explained as a “network of symbols, values, rites, and local traditions” that “provides the cohesive cement of a society”¹⁹⁴. Because it transfers shared understandings and values amongst present individuals and future generations, collective memory can be understood as a record of a

¹⁸⁶ Halbwachs, M. (1992 [1951]) ‘The Social Frameworks of Memory’, In *On Collective Memory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 37–189

¹⁸⁷ Crang, M. and Travlou, P.S. (2001) *The City and Topologies of Memory*. Environment and Planning D, Society and Space 19: 161–177; Dwyer, O.J. (2000) *Interpreting the Civil Rights Movement: Place, Memory, and Conflict*. Professional Geographer. Vol. 52, pp. 660–67; Edensor, T. (1997) *National Identity and the Politics of Memory: Remembering Bruce and Wallace in Symbolic Space*. Environment and Planning D: Society and Space Vol.15, pp.175–194; Till, K.E. (2001) ‘Reimagining national identity: ‘Chapters of Life’ at the German Historical Museum in Berlin’, In Adams, P.C., Hoelscher, S. and Till, K.E. (eds) *Textures of Place: Exploring Humanist Geographies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 273–299.

¹⁸⁸ Said, E.W. (2000) *Invention, Memory, and Place*. Critical Inquiry. Vol. 26, p.179

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.176

¹⁹⁰ Nora, P. (1989) *Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire*. Representations. Vol. 26, pp.7–25.

¹⁹¹ Giddens, A. (1990) *The Consequences of Modernity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press

¹⁹² Hobsbawm, E. and Ranger, T. (eds., 1983) *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

¹⁹³ Kratochwil, F. (2006) *History, Action and Identity: Revisiting the ‘Second’ Great Debate and Assessing its Importance for Social Theory*. European Journal of International Relations. Vol. 12 (1)

¹⁹⁴ Nora, P. (1989) *Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire*. Representations. Vol. 26

particular set of traditions, experiences and practices. Those elements, to re-iterate Smith, give meaning to the collectivity to exist in the present: they explain the existence of the group and define the collective identity.¹⁹⁵ By providing specific identity markers, collective memory maintains and transfers political meanings that are the basis for memory practices to provide cohesion and boundaries. “Each ‘we’”, says Assmann, “is constructed through shared practices and discourses that mark certain boundaries and define the principles of inclusion and exclusion”.¹⁹⁶ He adds that “to be part of a collective group such as the nation, one has to share and adopt the group's history, which exceeds the boundaries of one's individual life span.”¹⁹⁷ Such a subjective sense of shared or common identity and belonging is therefore crucial for the establishment of the nation. It is then understandable why certain states that seek to seek to fortify national sentiments do so through all possible means of manipulating the collective psyche, in order to mobilise the masses and develop in them, a sense of belonging - a set of national symbols that provide them with a reason to form a collectivity.

Because there are possibly as many memories confirming past wrongs as there are groups, such national institutions as truth commissions are often needed to re-articulate history and fix the national collective identity by institutionalising a singular memory of the past. In other words, for people to be able to imagine themselves as belonging together¹⁹⁸, such institutional and political processes may be used, through which states and people re-figure the past through nation-building strategies¹⁹⁹, in order to sculpt the path of collectivity and to overcome or even avoid the issues associated with cultural, racial and ethnic diversity and heterogeneity²⁰⁰. Such processes are supposed to allow for the creation of a sense of unity and reconciliation, but also assume that the nation has a common psyche, a singular way in which all individuals experience the past. This act, says Hamber, is that of “psychologising the nation”²⁰¹, implying that “the pursuit of national unity is a unitary and coherent process, and that individual and national processes of dealing with the past are largely concurrent and

¹⁹⁵ Smith, A.D. (1986) *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell

¹⁹⁶ Assmann A. (2008) *Transformations between History and Memory*. *Social Research*. Vol.75

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*,

¹⁹⁸ Hobsbawm, E. and Ranger, T. (eds., 1983) *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

¹⁹⁹ Such as the creation of collective memory

²⁰⁰ Amongst others

²⁰¹ Hamber, B. (1998) ‘Remembering to Forget: Issues to Consider when Establishing Structures for Dealing with the Past’, In Hamber, B. (ed.) *Past Imperfect: Dealing with the Past in Northern Ireland and Societies in Transition*. INCORE, Northern Ireland

equivalent.”²⁰² “Truth commissions aim to construct memory as a unified, static, collective object, not as political practice, or as a struggle over the representation of the past that will continue to be vigorously contested after their existence.”²⁰³ Usually established to deal with past wrongs and prevent their future occurrence, truth commissions emerge as a process of political transition: they are a mechanism for demonstrating a break from the (violent) past, a mechanism without which ‘new’ states are unable to transition and thus remain incapable of and reconstructing themselves on their own terms, and as per common consensus. Such states that do not mark this break from the past often fall prey to holding an ambiguous status²⁰⁴ for they replace ‘bad’ political leaders of the past regime with ‘new bad ones’, who very often allow - consciously or not - for growing neo-colonial possibilities in the ‘new’ political era. But as Archbishop Desmond Tutu explains, “[Experience worldwide shows that if you do not deal with a dark past such as ours, effectively look the beast in the eye, that beast is not going to lie down quietly, it is going as sure as anything, to come back and haunt you horrendously.”²⁰⁵

3.4. Psychologising the Nation

Truth commissions provide a foundational narrative, an empirical mode of codifying “the history of a period”, as explains Wilson,²⁰⁶ based on the imperative that the horrors of the past should not be repeated. They offer a framework for the legitimisation of a national master narrative that portrays the present as the best outcome, as the best possibility emerging from events of the past. Such forward-looking strategies, explains Hamber, “can play a vital forward-looking role. They can symbolically represent a collective willingness to deal with and part from the past, whilst having a shared memory and a common identity as a traumatised people. Furthermore, truth commissions usually make concrete recommendations and implement specific policies that both symbolically and announce a process of becoming something new – strategies essential for emerging democracies and countries coming out of

²⁰² Hamber, B. (1998) ‘Remembering to Forget: Issues to Consider when Establishing Structures for Dealing with the Past’, In Hamber, B. (ed.) *Past Imperfect: Dealing with the Past in Northern Ireland and Societies in Transition*. INCORE, Northern Ireland

²⁰³ *Ibid.*,

²⁰⁴ Such as those of Latin America, for instance, still deemed undemocratic, etc...

²⁰⁵ Cited in Goldstone, R. (22 January 1997) *Justice as a Tool for Peacemaking: Truth Commissions and International Criminal Tribunals*. Hauser Lecture, New York University

²⁰⁶ Wilson, R.A. (2001) *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Legitimizing the Post-Apartheid State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.16

conflict that are trying to shape a collective national identity.”²⁰⁷ The nation-building discourse of the Truth Commission homogenises, as says Hamber, “disparate individual memories”²⁰⁸, thence creating a single, official memory, an official version of the past that also represses other forms of remembering the past, achieving closure or even healing. Because the official memory of the past is, through truth commissions, ‘empirical’ and internationally recognised, state-sponsored archival methods and processes that provide ‘truths’ about the past are not easily challenged by citizens. Such methods and processes aim at the internalisation of certain values and perceptions of the past - into the collective consciousness, the subconscious, the psyche - that make people believe that what the state tells them is undisputable.

Consequently, and as they accept collective ‘truths’ and perceptions of the past and of how they have come to exist, individuals associate their ‘self’ with the master narrative that, as implied in the term, narrates a story that justifies the unification of people into a cohesive group, a unity, and a unit moving together in history: it is a narrative of continuity, of belonging and of origins that sculpts the path of the collectivity. It is a narrative through which past events are merged into a single narrative, engineering a single story about “common glories in the past”²⁰⁹, and “a common will in the present”²¹⁰, imposing new regimes of truth and repressing individual or sub-national modes of identification, memories, and histories, as Bauman suggests, to create a supra-national identity that ought to subsume any other sub-national mode of identification, and thence produce a homogenous nation²¹¹. But whilst such strategies to achieving social cohesion may be beneficial and lead to the development of a form of loyalty to the state and to a so-called nation, they often are repressive, replacing sub-national or private modes of identification, eradicating forms of cultural differentiation²¹² and eventually bringing about a crisis of national legitimacy²¹³. The

²⁰⁷ Hamber, B. (1998) ‘Remembering to Forget: Issues to Consider when Establishing Structures for Dealing with the Past’, In Hamber, B. (ed.) *Past Imperfect: Dealing with the Past in Northern Ireland and Societies in Transition*. INCORE, Northern Ireland

²⁰⁸ Hamber, B. (1998) ‘Remembering to Forget: Issues to Consider when Establishing Structures for Dealing with the Past’, In Hamber, B. (ed.) *Past Imperfect: Dealing with the Past in Northern Ireland and Societies in Transition*. INCORE, Northern Ireland,

²⁰⁹ Renan, E. (11 March 1882) *What is a Nation?* Lecture delivered at La Sorbonne University. Available at http://www.cooper.edu/humanities/classes/coreclasses/hss3/e_renan.html

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*,

²¹¹ Bauman, Z. (1998) *Globalization: The Human Consequences*. Cambridge: Polity Press. p.91-92

²¹² Hanf, T. (1989) ‘The Prospects of Accommodation in Communal Conflicts: A Comparative Study’, In Giliomee, H. and Schlemmer, L. (eds.) *Negotiating South Africa's Future*. Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, Centre for Policy Studies. pp. 89–113

enforcement of a supra-national psyche forces members of a society into modes of identification that may conflict with personal or group-related historical and value systems or marginalise those that are at the periphery of socio-political and economic power, where those whose group is in power would be more apt to feeling national sentiments. Complying with the rules of citizenship is crucial to producing a cohesive society. When members refuse to adhere to a supra-national identity, the state can only promote diversity, acknowledging and accommodating all different groups equally, in order to guarantee the rights of all, to sustain peace²¹⁴, and to promote a larger sense of unity that involves policies of multiculturalism.

Nations and nationalisms, it is evident from literature - whether in their Liberal and organic, Conservative and pathologically ethnocentric, Expansionist and colonialist, Anti-colonial or supposedly Post-colonial multicultural forms – all seem to be explained as the act of procuring a diverse groups with what Renan describes to be a soul, a common heritage and the memory of a common past; what Gellner suggests is common culture and social homogeneity; what Smith says is shared ancestry myths, culture and history geographically bound and dependent upon a sense of solidarity; and what Anderson argues to be possible because of the breakdown of social order and because of historic changes in religious power. Nations, at their most rudimentary form, can be explained as the development of a human desire to live together and to establish relationships and continuity, a congruent super-culture and supra-identity, a deep horizontal comradeship, a collective psyche, or network of invented or crafted symbols²¹⁵, values, rites, and local traditions” as suggests Pierre Nora, that provide a sense of shared or common identity used to promoting unity in plural societies. To create and maintain a cohesive and thus peaceful plural society, such institutions as Truth Commissions are set up to psychologise the nation by legitimising a national master narrative that expresses the desire to becoming something new and that homogenises disparate individual memories.

²¹³ Mattes, R. (1999) ‘Hypothesis on Identity and Democracy: Community Regime Institutions and Citizenship’, In Bekker, S. and Prinsloo, R., (eds. 1999). *Identity? Theory, Politics, History*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council. Vol I, pp.151-180

²¹⁴ Degenaar, J. (1994) ‘Beware of Nation-Building’, In Rhodie, N. and Liebenberg, J.(eds) *Democratic Nation-Building in South Africa..* Pretoria: HSRC. pp. 23–30. See also Horowitz, D.L. (1985) *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Horowitz, D.L. (1991) *A Democratic South Africa? Constitutional Engineering in a Divided Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press

²¹⁵ Symbols such as a national flag, hailed globally for representing a new political dispensation that may bring along unity in a diverse society

3.4. Conclusion

For people to be understood as a nation they must share a common mode of identification; they must feel bound to a motherland; and must be stimulated by a similar sense of belonging. This basic definition of the nation, as suggested at the beginning of this chapter, is crucial to understanding and explaining the development of Mauritianism, as well as the related challenges to achieving Chazalian nationalism. Commonly pursuing the ideal of living “as one people, as one nation”²¹⁶, nation-building strategies seem highly positive and constructive, but how easy a task is it to homogenise groups of plural societies such as that of Mauritius, and to forge in each of the diverse groups and individuals, the feeling that they ought to belong together? And can nation-building processes be sustained in divided societies? For how long are they sustained? Such questions will be addressed in the following chapter.

²¹⁶ Phrase of the Mauritian national anthem

Chapter 4: The First and Second Adages of Mauritianism

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an insight into the types of nationalisms and nation-building processes, as well as the difficult development of Mauritianism in pluri-ethnic Mauritius. In this chapter, such factors as the lack of equal opportunity and good governance are explained, that lead to ethnic conflicts on the island, thence preventing the achievement and maintenance of the various Mauritian nationalisms.

Whilst the idea of building and consolidating a nation ought, as discussed in the Literature Review, to produce a deep horizontal comradeship amongst individuals and groups, the enforcement of a collective psyche has proven problematic, highly controversial and often lack popular consensus as they negate sub-national groups or fail to accommodate them²¹⁷. The principal findings of this research also indicate that, whilst political leaders and the population alike seek to forge a true rainbow nation, the ways in which they seek to achieve Mauritianism differ. Whilst politicians seem (for a long time) to be content with constructing symbols of nationhood that propel economic growth (but that also neglect true social development), the population seeks equality (economic, political and social) and comradeship amongst all ethnicities. Through the analysis of secondary data and observation, it becomes clear that an idyllic Mauritianism has not yet been realised, that it often has been as ephemeral as the rainbow that symbolises it, and that there are differing expectations and reasons to explaining the need to forge, maintain and consolidate the true Star of the Indian Ocean - the Stella Clavisque Maris Indici.

4.1. Introducing the Early Development of Mauritius

Portuguese and Arab merchants are possibly aware of the island, but it is the Dutch who are first to 'use' *Stella*, naming her in honour of their prince, Mauritz van Nassau²¹⁸, after discovering the island in the 16th century²¹⁹. Trade is their most valued capability and the establishment of the Dutch East India Company only confirms their skills in overseas trade

²¹⁷ Example of the Creole population who is still underrepresented in Mauritian politics or are often said to be members of the 'General Population', which has become a political category that includes all those who are not Hindu, or the fact that the Creole language is not an official Mauritian language and is not taught in schools like Hindi, Tamil and Telugu (Indian languages) are.

²¹⁸ Vaughan, M. (2005). *Creating the Creole Island: Slavery in the Eighteenth Century*. Duke University Press. pp.1-33

²¹⁹ Dewoo, T. (2012). *The Coolitude of Coolitude: The (Re)Negotiation of the Indian Identity in Mauritius*. Postamble. Vol.8(1), p.7

and their rivalry with Portugal at the time. In order to supply food and water to ships en route to the East Indies, they choose Mauritius as a base, a port of call. Their labour consists of convicts from Batavia and slaves from Africa²²⁰ who mainly cut ebony trees to be sent to Europe and the East Indies. The Dutch collect ambergris, a crucial element used in the concoction of perfumes in Europe at the time²²¹, and found on the shores of Mauritius. After years of intense resource extraction and exploitation, the Dutch leave the island, deciding that using it as a base is no longer profitable, and move to the Cape of Good Hope²²². Shipwrecks, turbulent waters, threats from the British and the French and a high demand for ebony bring them back to the island in the mid-16th century. They remain on the island until 1710²²³, exterminating the famous *Dodo*²²⁴, introducing cotton, tobacco, deer and more importantly, sugarcane (used to produce arrack and rum), which is until today the most lucrative cash crop of the island. Sugarcane, ebony, slaves, East Indian labour, export base and *maronnage*²²⁵ (slaves who hide in the Mauritian forests and attack their masters) are amongst the very first words to characterise Mauritius and its primitive history. The Dutch set in motion a series of historical processes that define the modern Mauritian island.

The French, pursuing the European expansionist ideal of the 18th century, take control of Mauritius five years after the Dutch leave the island. They bring to its shores a small number of Indian artisans bought from slave traders in the Muslim ports of the Madagascar and the East Coast of Africa, and who are needed in the former Dutch plantations on the island²²⁶. The French rename the island *Isle de France*, settling there only in 1721, enforcing the *Code Noir*²²⁷ in 1723, and administering the island until 1735, from *Bourbon*, the neighbouring French colony today known as *L'Ile de La Reunion*. Following the orders of the French East India Company, the colons²²⁸ are granted land and slaves (*biens meubles*²²⁹, non-humans, and simple property deprived of rights and heritage that are insured since they are the mere assets

²²⁰ Moree, P.J. (1998) *A Concise History of Dutch Mauritius, 1598-1710: A Fruitful and Healthy Land*. Kegan Paul International

²²¹ *Ibid.*,

²²² *Ibid.*,

²²³ *Ibid.*,

²²⁴ Consensus has not been reached about how the extermination of the Dodo has come about, but Mauritians have never hesitated in blaming the Dutch for it.

²²⁵ Maronnage is used to define *les esclaves marrons*, the first slaves to escape their masters

²²⁶ Hazareesingh, K. (1975) *History of the Indians in Mauritius*. MacMillan, London. pp.80-90

²²⁷ The Code Noir is a series of laws that would determine how slavery would operate, and what it entailed, both to the owner and his slave throughout *all* French colonies.

²²⁸ French colonisers

²²⁹ See Chattel labour for more details of *biens meubles*

of their masters) necessary for cultivation on Mauritian soil. The demand for labour increases exponentially and some 156 ships call at the island in a period of 20 years²³⁰ and as international trade increases and makes of France the largest European maritime trading power. France's extending capabilities in long-distance trade forever marks Port Louis as that space where a class of traders and merchants thrive and make of the port city the capital of Mauritius, the warehousing centre and the contemporary commercial heart of the island. This French economic upsurge is still remembered today in the various statues that remain in the capital – statues that serve as a means to memorialising the past - and whose most famous is that of Mahe de Labourdonnais, administrator of the island from 1735 to 1749.²³¹ The French East India Company later becomes bankrupt and has to sell to the Crown of France, the islands of *Bourbon* and *Isle de France*. Appointed by the Crown as Intendant, Pierre Poivre then initiates the (slow and not very profitable) production of cash crops including spices – today 'typical' of Mauritius, and yet another historical marker. In 1787, the French East India Company loses its monopoly of Asian trade, and Port Louis becomes a free port, the *Port Franc* that it still is today, open to ships and traders from everywhere in the world, and stimulating the Mauritian economy and agriculture²³².

The rivalry between Britain and France for the control of sea routes to Australasia²³³ culminates into wars and struggles in the first half of the 1800s, during which the French are defeated. The British, now the most powerful colonial force in terms of military, economy and naval capability, take possession of Mauritius, pursuing the same colonial path as the Dutch and the French, which is looking to boost their own expansionism, trade and investment. The Indian Ocean and the Cape of Good Hope become strategic in British colonialism. As the British conquer Mauritius in 1810, after a war against the French, they move towards a single cash crop economy to recover from previous economic and natural disasters, and sugarcane acquires the economic importance²³⁴ that it still holds in the

²³⁰ Lougnon, A. (1958) *Le Mouvement Maritime aux Iles de France et Bourbon pendant les premières Années du règne personnel de Louis XV (1727-1735)*. Archives Départementales de la Réunion ; Largesse, M. (1973) *L'île de France avant Labourdonnais*. Ile Maurice

²³¹ As importantly, it is the French who first define the socio-economic and political reality that characterises contemporary Mauritius, leaving the 'general population', the *gens de couleur* at the bottom of the hierarchical ladder of the Mauritian society, who still hold such jobs as carpenter, household servants, fishermen and craftsmen.

²³² The demand for sugar from Mauritius increases due to the Revolution in St Domingue²³², boosting the sugar industry and enabling the operation of tens of sugar factories on the island – factories still present today in the Mauritian landscape, even if they have been revamped, transformed or closed down.

²³³ Australia, and Asia (India and China)

²³⁴ Hazareesingh, K. (1975) *History of the Indians in Mauritius*. MacMillan, London. pp.86

Mauritius. Sugarcane fields are extended, as does the demand for labour, raw material, land and craftsmanship. The scramble for Africa begins at around that time, and more Africans are enslaved to work on plantations in the Tropics.²³⁵ Unfortunately for British colonialists, slavery is abolished in the 1830s²³⁶ and the British need to look elsewhere for labour. A new system of coercing people to work on plantations is required and the solution comes in the form of a system of forced labour, closely resembling slavery. The British first turn their attention away from African states, and look briefly to China for ‘coolie’²³⁷ labour, but the Chinese are deemed unfit to work in the fields²³⁸. The British then focus on India to replace the previously enslaved Africans on plantations across the British Empire. Between 1834 and 1924, an incredible number of 450,000²³⁹ Indians are enticed by the ‘opportunity’ that is offered either to their children or to themselves, and call at the *Appravasi Ghat*, today a monument memorialising the arrival of Indian immigrants in Mauritius.²⁴⁰ About 160,000 of them return to India following the end of their contract²⁴¹ and the final influx of immigrants comes to a halt in the early 19th century, coinciding with India’s liberation struggles against the British and setting the stage for a gradual evolution of political culture in Mauritius.²⁴² At the time, Indian politicians and activists including Gandhi, Tagore and Nehru employ logical and legal arguments to undermine the legitimacy of British domination in India, highlighting the contradictions and oppression of the Empire, and demanding that support and freedom from the British Indian Government²⁴³ be given to the Indian Diaspora, in such colonies as South Africa and Mauritius.²⁴⁴

Following the apparent failure of the British in providing such support and welfare system, Indian politicians and activists of India claim their Independence, but such freedom comes at a cost to the Indian Diaspora in Mauritius. India is no longer a subject nation fighting a

²³⁵ Allen, R.B. (1999) *Slaves, Freedmen, and Indentured Labourers in Colonial Mauritius*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.12

²³⁶ Chandrasekhar, S (1990) *The Population of Mauritius*, New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company. p.19-25

²³⁷ coolie:

²³⁸ Instead they end open small shops - today the most successful retail and wholesale enterprise of the Mauritius.

²³⁹ One of the largest mass movement episodes of human history?

²⁴⁰ Hazareesingh, K. (1975) *History of the Indians in Mauritius*. MacMillan, London. pp.80-

²⁴¹ Moerkamp, J. (1998) *Te Gast in Mauritius*. Nijmegen: Informatie Verre Reizen. p.17

²⁴² Moerkamp, J. (1998) *Te Gast in Mauritius*. Nijmegen: Informatie Verre Reizen. p.21. See also Dewoo, T. (2012). *The Coolitude of Coolitude: The (Re)Negotiation of the Indian Identity in Mauritius*. Postamble. Vol.8(1) for a more detailed explanation of Indian migrants and the Indian Diaspora in Mauritius

²⁴³ India, at the time of British colonialism

²⁴⁴ Hazareesingh, K. (1975) *History of the Indians in Mauritius*. MacMillan, London. pp.19-20; Moerkamp, J. (1998) *Te Gast in Mauritius*. Nijmegen: Informatie Verre Reizen. p.17

coloniser, and its interest in and concern for the welfare of Indians living abroad shift as its capabilities for financial and political support of Indians abroad slowly dissolve.²⁴⁵ Further concerned with developing and re-building relationships within an international context, newly-independent India needs, for its own benefit at the time, to give less attention and less support to the ongoing struggle for the better treatment of Indians abroad. The much admired²⁴⁶ tireless Indian struggle obvious during Mohandas Gandhi's visit to the island in 1901 shifts to simply ending the domination of Great Britain and colonialism, a political interest that is far less specific to the Indian Diaspora, and that forever isolates the Indian Diaspora community of Africa, culturally, politically and economically. Gandhi echoes this position when he writes in *Satyagraha*, "Indian emigrants in other parts of the British Empire...if they are suppressed, will be suppressed thanks [...] to India's inability to protect them²⁴⁷".

4.2. Mauritian Struggle to Independence

India becomes, in the mid-1900s, a source of moral support and inspiration rather than a source of direct political intervention in the affairs of the Diaspora. As Nehru says in 1947, despite their "keen interest" in their ancestral land, the Diaspora is no longer an extension of Mother India, and thus abandoned, needs to "show loyalty to their country", that is, the new Motherland.²⁴⁸ The Diaspora renounces the idea of the prodigal return to Mother India at this time in history – a choice that is largely compensated by the symbolic re-appropriation of Mauritius as Mother Earth. Indo-Mauritians then distance themselves from their Indian past to secure a successful Mauritian present. They turn inward and initiate, in the 20th century, the nationalist trends that are to become the defining nature of Mauritian politics and economics, revealing of the idea that nationalism often originates with the elite, the intellectually- or politically-trained elite, or with a class that aspires to nationalism and the 'rest' is simply appropriated into it. More importantly, such elite-enforced nationalist trends further expose the fact that post-Independence nationalism does not necessarily bring about post-colonialism (at least not in Mauritius). Pro-independence Mauritian leaders, indeed, do not seek for the kind of deliverance that their African neighbours fight for: their goal is not to destroy colonial structures; it is not to suppress epistemic violence; it is not to give to all the

²⁴⁵ Hazareesingh, K. (1975) *History of the Indians in Mauritius*. MacMillan, London. pp.19-20; Moerkamp, J. (1998) *Te Gast in Mauritius*. Nijmegen: Informatie Verre Reizen. p.17

²⁴⁶ Admired by the Diaspora

²⁴⁷ Gandhi, M. (1951) *Satyagraha* New York: Schocken Books. p.307

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.307

capability to (re)present themselves; and it is certainly not to regulate access to knowledge, resource and more importantly, power. Those Mauritians who seek liberation do not pretend to progress against the “enemy of Europe” and do not prophesise to moving towards a world history in which the “importance of Europe” needs to be undervalued.²⁴⁹ Their political choices are simply bound to finding ways of achieving political similarity and homogeneity as a means to move towards a peaceful and common future - a common memory, a future of invented traditions.

In the footsteps of the Indian liberation freedom fighters of the early 20th century, Seewosagur Ramgoolam²⁵⁰ takes over the Mauritian Labour Party in 1936 (MLP, started by progressive Creoles in the 1930s²⁵¹) whose politics - loyal to and influenced by Fabian Socialism²⁵² - revolve around the gradual economic and political empowerment of Mauritius's Indian Diaspora, to replace the colonial elite. As importantly, the Diaspora claims to seek Mauritian Independence as a process analogous to that of India's independence struggles, thence justifying their privileges in the post-independent state. And, finally, they show a clear lack of effort in re-negotiating or negating other forms of colonial legacies (its structures and various forms of violence, whether epistemic, mental or physical) in the independent state. Mauritian liberation movements are restricted to achieving political independence – by putting to power different leaders, by relying on the historical force already available through the colonial system and that allow for peripheral and mainstream identities that demarcate the Mauritian population into those groups that are able and unable to make demands and share economic and political spoils²⁵³. In 1937, following worker protests and strikes instigated by the MLP, the right to vote is granted to those above 21 who can sign their name. The politics of the Mauritian colony change dramatically as Britain loses its grip on its colonies and Ramgoolam - whose party, although composed of all possible Mauritian

²⁴⁹ Césaire, A. (1972) *Discourse on Colonialism*. Trans. Joan Pinkham, New York, Monthly Review Press

²⁵⁰ Mauritian who pursues his tertiary education in England, where he meets with and is influenced by Mohandas Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, and the reknowned writer, Rabindranath Tagore, all fighting for freedom or nationalism. His encounters will change the course Mauritian politics.

²⁵¹ There are two versions of the MLP's beginnings: one that states that Ramgoolam founds the party, and another that claims that Creoles started it, and Ramgoolam only takes over later on. Whose version prevails? It is that of 'Ramgoolam, the founder of the MLP.'

²⁵² Seewoosagur Ramgoolam is influenced by Fabian Socialism when in England, as a student and member of various political organisations. According to its official website, "The Fabian Society had been founded in England in 1884 as a socialist society committed to gradual rather than revolutionary social reform." The name of the group comes from the Roman general Quintus Fabius who was known for the strategy of delaying battle until exactly what he deemed to be the perfect moment. Among the early members of the Fabian Society were the playwright, George Bernard Shaw, and, writer, H. G. Wells

²⁵³ Reference to Trouillot's explanation of the unthinkable history

ethnicities, is perceived as a vehicle for Hindu hegemony - is able to quicken the pace of constitutional reform in order to organise and secure for his community, the same kind of dignity that Nehru and Gandhi achieve for the people of India, and the same kind of opportunities that the other free peoples²⁵⁴ of Mauritius enjoy already: electricity, water and the opportunity for democracy.

Mauritius's first step towards self-rule is secured through the enforcement of elections for a new Legislative Assembly, under Guy Rosemont, leader of the MLP at the time. But this first step is also the most marginalising one: it causes communalism, a term that enters the Mauritian political lexicon, and suggests the existence of four distinct Mauritian groups – the Hindus, the Muslims, the Chinese, and anybody else who does not fit in those categories are supposed Creoles or members of the General Population. The leading MLP remains a threat to the Creole community's economic position (a position that occurs due to the Creoles' allegiance to and political coalition with the white elite in Mauritius). The Creole community instigates communal riots in May 1965 (in which Hindus and Creoles clash in the village of *Trois Boutiques*). It is important to note here that it does not seem to be Mauritian diversity that causes conflicts. In fact, there does not seem to be any country that is not characterised by diversity. Yet, not all of them experience diversity-related violence. The problem of communal conflicts in Mauritius seems to stem only from the conditions that govern the relations amongst different groups: pro-independence Mauritian politicians maintain the social strata set up during the era of colonialism, whereby certain ethnicities are kept at the bottom of the hierarchy, marginalised and stigmatised by those who are able to control Mauritian politics and economics. Such identities, internalised during the colonial era, will unfortunately remain the basis for post-independent Mauritius and are the immediate cause of internal pressures and conflicts. The soon-to-be 'new state' only seems to act as a predatory apparatus that suppresses the interests of those marginalised groups as the Creole community, who in retaliation choose, as prove the various communal riots, to challenge the state's sovereignty and control. They seek to expose such colonial legacies as the as the centralisation of power and the underrepresentation of minorities that prevent them from advancing their political, cultural, social and economic interests, subaltern groups. Because of the state's unwillingness to address and perhaps even redress their marginalised status and 'subaltern' identities at the time of rising independence campaigns, those groups incessantly

²⁵⁴ The ex-slaves and ex-colons

and violently rebel against the Mauritian state, in order to attempt to contest the Hindu hegemony and the imposition of cultural conformity and the creation of a cohesive and singular national identity that may deny them the opportunities and right to express their cultural differences and interests.

Despite contest, the Mauritian independence campaign gains momentum and an MLP-led pro-independence coalition party – which, contrary to other African countries, is not a de-colonial and anti-colonial political party, but simply seeks political independence and eventually, legitimacy - the Independent Alliance, composed other parties such as the Muslim Committee of Action (CAM, headed by Abdool Razack Mohammed) and the Independent Forward Bloc (IFB) win a majority in the Legislative Assembly election of 1967²⁵⁵. The coalition party comprised of Hindu plantation workers, small-scale sugar farmers and smaller political parties unites and initiates the first wave of Mauritian nationalism, that is, unity against the oppressor and self-determination. Hindu freedom fighters take power against the British and against the Parti Mauricien Social Democrate (PMSD – Social Democratic Mauritian Party originally established to represent the interests of the white Franco-Mauritian elite – planters and their wealthy ‘mixed race’ Creole allies),²⁵⁶ anti-independantists said to be frightened by the prospect of Indo-Mauritian political and economic domination.²⁵⁷ There is, at this point, no unity or agreement amongst Mauritian citizens in the struggle against the coloniser: “This division amidst the population and the United Kingdom’s wish to grant the Independence are factors that definitely hindered the building of a Mauritian nation. The ‘imagined community’ of a new nation-to-be does not attract all the groups. There is no solidarity of an imaginary ‘us’ against a symbolic ‘them’”²⁵⁸. Despite contest and opposition from anti-independantists - supporters of Gaetan Duval (a Creole) and Jules Koenig (member of the white elite), two main figures of the Mauritian Social Democratic Party (PMSD) - the Indian diaspora does not seem to be destabilised. This then fuels a new wave of communal violence that culminates, in January 1968, in riots between Muslims and Creoles, causing numerous deaths, thousands of arrests and hundreds of displaced families.

²⁵⁵ Addison, J. and Hazareesingh, K. (1984) *A New History of Mauritius*. Rose-Hill: Editions de l’Océan Indien

²⁵⁶ Eisenlohr, P. (2006) *Little India: Diaspora, Time, and Ethnolinguistic belonging in Hindu Mauritius*, London: Berkeley University Press

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*,

²⁵⁸ Bunwaree, S. (2000) quoted by the Observatoire Réunionnais des Arts, des Civilisations et des Littératures dans leur Environnement. Article available online at http://laboratoires.univ-reunion.fr/oracle/documents/malcoml_chazal.html

4.3. First Adage: National Unity

After a long period of political unrest, internal opposition and Indo-Mauritian militant involvement, the island gains its independence from the British in 1968.²⁵⁹ Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, having secured a new Mauritian constitution (through the Independent Alliance led by the MLP) that enfranchises the entirety of the Mauritian population, becomes the first ‘Prince’, the first Hindu Mauritian leader, despite 44% of the population voting against Independence.²⁶⁰ The role of the MLP in achieving Independence and the Creole- and white-elite-led opposition place the Indian Diaspora in the highest governmental positions of Mauritius to replace the colonial elite, and causing further tensions between the Creole and Indian communities that remain obvious in the Mauritian political and economic landscapes. “Given the blurred boundaries between party, government and state under a factual one-party system subordinating the state and the growing equation of the party being the government and the government being the state, any opposition or dissent is considered to be hostile and branded as an enemy to the people and the national interest.”²⁶¹ But Princes do not seem to wish for Hindu hegemony in politics (at least not openly), and instead show their concern for and interest in all Mauritian communities, in an attempt to appease the divided nation. They advertise national unity, a political ideology that ought to bring the opposition to accept the new Hindu-led government: “The Government and especially the Prime Minister have to spend a lot of time and effort in maintaining good relations between various ethnic groups.”²⁶² This seems to remain their goal until now.

Mauritian leaders seek to enforce the notion of a homogenous population composed of various victimised groups united towards achieving political freedom. The new government then incessantly seeks ways of achieving political similarity and homogeneity as a means to move towards a common future – a common memory, a future of invented tradition, and more importantly a homogenous national group. Mauritians are asked, for instance, to celebrate such ethnic-bound events as the abolition of slavery (to which the Afro-Creoles would relate) and the arrival of Indian indentured labourers (which Indo-Mauritians would celebrate) as a nation. Such national celebrations ought to bring citizens of the island together

²⁵⁹ Addison, J. and Hazareesingh, K. (1984) *A New History of Mauritius*. Rose-Hill: Editions de l’Océan Indien

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*,

²⁶¹ Melber, H. (2002) *From Liberation Movements to Governments: On Political Culture in Southern Africa*. African Sociological Review 6(1). p163

²⁶² Memo, M. A. Burney, to Mr. A. G. El Emary, “Visit to Mauritius – November 11-17, 1969,” December 1, 1969, WB IBRD/IDA 01 MAU.

– to avoid future communal violence and to allow for unity, through compromise and tolerance of the ‘other’. To this end, liberation leaders provide the necessary social framework, as says Müller, “through which nationally conscious individuals can organise their memory”²⁶³ – that is, the necessary framework to allow individuals to forge social consciousness. Such consciousness - invented through traditions, culture, myths, symbols and other practices - cultivates memories that are internalised and accepted as undisputable, as truth, and normal by those who further choose to live in commonality, solidarity and tolerance²⁶⁴. The national group is then to be understood as a shared desire. As suggests Renan, the nation is possible because politicians make memory and because people do accept such an institutionalised process as they wish to form an undivided group: “the past and present are linked in one collective group [...] it is a two-dimensional group, operating simultaneously in the past and the present.”²⁶⁵ Thus, national identity is shaped by boundaries: the national self and others become clear and distinct identities, beliefs and perceptions of belonging are institutionalised and imposed by the state.

In the words of Sir Seewosagur Ramgoolam, Mauritian Independence is subsequently to be defined by inherited traditions and unifying symbols: “As we open a new chapter of our history we shall always remember that we are the inheritors of a great tradition, which is vested in the very history of our land. The daring and valour of our seamen, the creative imagination of the early colonisers, who included men and women from all continents, the hardy patience of those legions of workers whose efforts have enabled us to reach our present position, the respect which we have always shown for democratic principles, our love for justice and liberty, these will be the guiding lights of our national policy.”²⁶⁶ At that point in the Mauritian history, political leaders seem to simply seek to foster national unity - echoing the Mauritian mantra or adage “as one people, as one nation”, without necessarily forsaking their chance of maintaining relationships with the previous leaders or even with the opposition party, a route that Gaetan Duval himself follows, holding very close ties with England and France at the time²⁶⁷. As explain Bond and Masimba, “after national liberation,

²⁶³ Müller, J.W. (2002). ‘Introduction. The Power of Memory, the Memory of Power and the Power over Memory’, In Müller, J.W. *Memory & Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 1-35

²⁶⁴ Renan, E. (11 March 1882) *What is a Nation?* Lecture delivered at La Sorbonne University. Available at http://www.cooper.edu/humanities/classes/coreclasses/hss3/e_renan.html.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*,

²⁶⁶ Ramgoolam, S. (1979) *Selected Speeches*, London: Macmillan. p. 129

²⁶⁷ Bérenger, P.R. (10 August 1967) *Et Maintenant?* L’Express

the petit-bourgeois leadership can abandon its alliance with workers and peasants and emerge as the new ruling class by gaining certain concessions from both foreign and local capital and, in fact, forming a new alliance with these forces, which they need to stay in power. Of course, lip-service commitment, *à la Kenya*, to the masses will be made.”²⁶⁸ The immediate solution to enforcing political alliance is believed to be crucial in establishing confidence in the new state, its new government and its new leaders: a coalition government representative of all Mauritian ethnicities may guarantee that all be treated as equals. National unity and equality ought to become more important than individuals’ ethnic selves. People will not be Hindu, Muslim, Chinese or Creole, for instance, but Mauritian. The new government apparently wants all to be united towards the same goal and have the same and equal chance of benefitting from democracy and Independence: there ought to be no communal divisions in the country.

However, the more the new government pushes for national unity, the more public expectations rise within communities, with regards to the equal provision of health, education and other welfare services. It becomes obvious, in the latter part of the 20th century, that the Mauritian kaleidoscope of identities hides more ethnicised communal selves that mask differences that exist despite the enforcement of the adage of unity. Princes, because of their socio-political stature, because of their political and cultural ‘superiority’, have remained in such positions that benefit them highly. However, they are instantaneously challenged and so is their imposition of a form of ‘Hindu-led’ cultural conformity, which the distinct and diverse cultural and ethnic groups of Mauritius do not wish to assimilate and find contradictory. Such contradictions in a supposedly homogenising population are expressed because of rising unemployment amongst the youth²⁶⁹. The youth rallies behind a new opposing political party, the MMM²⁷⁰, formed in 1969 and organised by such political figures as Paul Bérenger (a Franco-Mauritian) and Dev Virahsawmy (a Telegu speaker from the Indian diaspora), who appeal to the poor and working class by seeking socialist change, and whose vision remains prominent in contemporary Mauritian politics. Active in fighting against unemployment from 1971 to 1976, lowering the voting age to 18 in 1975, the MMM becomes more successful than the ruling coalition, whose members prove corrupt and unwilling to support the cause of

²⁶⁸ Bond, P. and Masimba M. (2002) *Zimbabwe’s Plunge: Exhausted Nationalism, Neoliberalism and the Search for Social Justice*. Merlin Press, p. 25

²⁶⁹ Eriksen, T.H. (1989) *Communicating Cultural Difference and Identity: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Mauritius*. Oslo: University of Oslo Press. Occasional Papers in Social Anthropology, Vol. 16

²⁷⁰ Mouvement Militant Mauricien

the public, trade unions and oppressed citizens of other islands such as the Chagos Archipelago²⁷¹. To prevent any further decline in their popularity, the MLP and PMSD choose to ally, against the MMM. The Mauritian government is, at that point, plagued with internal, class and communal divisions, based on a series of scandals and poor economic performance, which have destructive effects on the public itself and on its confidence in freedom fighters and in the new government. Several alliances follow, and new parties are created, others seeking to enforce their vision of new Mauritius, and all doing it by targeting specific members of the population. Because of such partisan politics, the principle of national unity is not sustained for long on the island: all political parties seek to perfect the Mauritian political and economic landscape to their advantage, but in turn, contradict the possibility of the Chazalian ideal of unity and collective memory-making based on a new Motherland that ought to belong to all in post-independent Mauritius.

4.5. Second Adage: Mauritian Diversity

Understanding the modest success of the first adage, and perhaps fearful that their own imposition of a cohesive and homogenous society whilst they retain socio-political and economic power might exhaust their newly-gained political legitimacy, Princes adopt a second motto, that of diversity. It is advertised as Mauritian multicultural nationalism, a form of cultural mosaic that rejects the dogmatic nationalist idea that people ought to be culturally similar when in the same state. Mauritians then, do not have to be united anymore or even share the same memories. Instead, Princes encourage divisions, whether they are cultural, religious, linguistic and political, sacrificing popular unity and memory for the benefit and recognition of all groups and traditions. The principle of pluralism functions at all levels of the nation, and recognises the existence of group specificities in terms of language, culture, religion and political affiliations, amongst other elements. Citizens of Mauritius are officially allowed equal rights, living in a free, democratic and secular state²⁷². This second discourse proposes a post-independence exemplar of interracial peace, harmony, forgiveness, progression and modernisation, acclaimed as an African social success story, a true rainbow

²⁷¹ The MLP and its allies are in favour, at the time, of the presence of the United States military presence in Diego Garcia, and are in the process of giving away the Chagos Archipelago, of which Diego Garcia is part of (home to Chagossian Mauritians) to the West. The MMM, on the other hand, is in favour of returning the Chagos to Mauritius. This controversial 'selling out' remains a major problem in Mauritian politics, where Chagossians are left with no homeland, nowhere to call theirs, and move around, from Mauritius to other islands, where they can find temporary refuge, but are often ostracized and marginalised.

²⁷² Mathur, H., (1991) *Parliament in Mauritius*. Mauritius: Editions de L'Ocean Indien.

nation²⁷³. The Mauritian Chazalian nationalism ought to serve as an example to all the other African states that are unable to move on from a violent past towards building a common future, towards building a nation. All Diasporas ought to be represented in Mauritian politics and, through the best loser system²⁷⁴, should be confirmed as 'equal' citizens who are now able to maintain strong material and sentimental ties with their motherland, their different cultures and trying to preserve their distinct identity. All ought to be unequivocally assimilated into the formerly partisan Mauritian politics and public welfare systems. "In a multi ethnic society as ours, it is of utmost importance that each community feels secure and safe by having someone, from their groups, represented in the supreme decision making institution. The best loser system allows eight candidates, who failed to get elected, to join the National Assembly, based partially on their ethnic identity."²⁷⁵ The World Bank Report of 1997 even explains that the best loser system will, because it guarantees the equal representation of every Mauritian ethnicity in Parliament, contribute to forging a peaceful nation, a true national cohesion.²⁷⁶ It is indeed difficult to deny that such policy is beneficial to all who are represented in Parliament, but, as Mathur argues, the best loser system may not only encourage communal divisions and split Mauritian society, but also prevent the development of a united nation and the fair representation of all communities: "[...] the best loser system and the present electoral delimitations promote and encourage communalism and are therefore, detrimental to nation building."²⁷⁷

4.4. Mitigated Success of the First Two Nation-building Adages

Despite the political elite's efforts in uniting and representing all Mauritians, the Creole community remains marginalised, underrepresented and excluded²⁷⁸ from the Mauritian political system of the late 20th century: "The country started to take off in the midst 1980s and large amount of progress was achieved. Unfortunately, the state stakeholders, mainly the politicians and the capitalist entrepreneurs failed to distribute the benefits of the economic gains in a just and fair manner to the population. There was an unequal redistribution of wealth and income which led to a few becoming very rich and the majority of the population

²⁷³ Term coined in South Africa to claim to a colourful and pluralistic society

²⁷⁴ Richards, N. (August 2007) *Country Studies Series: Mauritius*. Coexistence International, Brandeis University

²⁷⁵ Suntoo, R. (2012) *Consolidation of the National Building in a Multi-Ethnic Society: The Case of Mauritius*. University of Mauritius. Article accessed at www.theinternationaljournal.org > RJSSM: Volume: 01, Number: 10, Feb-2012 on the 15th of August 2012. p.98

²⁷⁶ World Bank Report (1997) *World Bank Report 1997*

²⁷⁷ Mathur, H., (1991) *Parliament in Mauritius*. Mauritius: Editions de L'Océan Indien. p.69

²⁷⁸ Through a highly ethnicised division of labour

falling under the poverty trap. As early as 1990s, people from the lower classes, and even those from the middle classes, were getting much difficulties to meet both ends. The authority was very slow at taking the right decisions to remedy the situation, which continued to deteriorate further. Hence, the social fabrics started weakening and the peace and harmony were threatened. On the international scene, ethnic conflict and violence in Russia and the Arabian countries were escalating. Such news portrayed by the media aggravated the situation in Mauritius. The ethnic concerns in the multi ethnic society started reappearing. There was an ethnic revivalism and the Mauritian nation, with its increasing pockets of poverty, was at stake.²⁷⁹ The Mauritian state, at this point, still favours partisan politics that allow for the asymmetrical distribution of entitlements, privileges and resources in favour of the freedom fighters, and to the detriment of the anti-independentists: having symbolically appropriated Mauritius as their land, the one that they politically fought for, the Indo-Mauritians' identity supersedes all other identities, and enters into ethnic competition with other diasporas in Mauritius.²⁸⁰ Racial division and conflicts in the post-independent country are rendered complex by the affiliation of most liberation leaders with Hinduism and the Indian caste system²⁸¹, which play a major role in shaping the 'naturally superior' identity of the Indo-Mauritian, his attitudes and behaviour, towards the 'rest', especially the 'naturally subaltern' ex-slave communities of Mauritius, towards the past, and more importantly, towards building a nation. One must remember that this is exactly what the Indian Diaspora seeks, during its exilic beginnings²⁸², when leaving for Mauritius. Considered forms of 'social pollution', when finally free from the British, they simply seize the opportunity to transcend their marginal identities by forging a kleptocratic state: upon Independence, they appropriate Mauritius and all the benefits that it proposes. "The Creoles", on the other hand,

²⁷⁹ Suntoo, R. (2012) *Consolidation of the National Building in a multi-ethnic society: The Case of Mauritius*. University of Mauritius. Article accessed at www.theinternationaljournal.org RJSSM: Volume: 01, Number: 10, Feb-2012 on the 15th of August 2012. p.98

²⁸⁰ Mathur, H., (1991) *Parliament in Mauritius*. Mauritius: Editions de L'Océan Indien. p.69. A similar pattern is seen in contemporary South African politics, where the African National Congress (ANC) - despite contestation, despite its radicalism of the 1980s, despite its mitigated success and despite the constant opposition of its policies, the 'freedom-fighting' party - remains, the 'only one' that 'is representative' of the voice and the cause of the oppressed in the country, or so claims the party.

²⁸¹ Bertelsmann Stiftung (2009) *BTI 2010 — Mauritius Country Report*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, p.3-5

²⁸² The *kala pani* poetics is an important reading of sugarcane history, the story of Indian migrant labourers who seek to re-negotiate their identity whilst interrogating past alienation. Free from the British rule, the Indian diaspora begins to think and re-think their initial goal: that of re-negotiating their identity and facilitating the maintenance and propagation of ancestral Indian tradition and culture.

stigmatised as anti-independentists, “are perhaps the ones endowed with the least resources and in these globalised times opportunities are getting scarcer.”²⁸³

The growing gap between the haves (elite composed of Franco-Mauritians, and the politically and economically-advantaged Indo-Mauritians) and the have-nots further exacerbates “*Le Malaise Creole*”²⁸⁴, which culminates in communal tension that is highlighted by the death of the famous *seggae*²⁸⁵ singer, Kaya, in police custody²⁸⁶. His death triggers, in February 1999, a series of violent and destructive protest marches against Indo-Mauritian hegemony, capitalism and wealth in the country, echoing the anti-independentists’ fears of the 1960s. Again, Creoles fight on one side, and Muslims and Hindus on the other, indicative of the deeper societal and political problem that is the frustration of the Creole community, still marginalised by a state that claims to wish for equality for all. As argues Assman, “even when laws, policies and programs appear in a formal sense to be objective and impartial, they may be skewed in implementation by public administration to favour one set of ethnic claimants over others. This ethnic skewing can be applied to matters of substantial value, including government contracts, access to land, credit, capital, business licenses and foreign exchange, and to a variety of public services such as higher education, municipal amenities, housing, water supply and recreational facilities.”²⁸⁷ The adage of diversity (multicultural nationalism) proves too complex and too divisive, and only supports inequalities that continue from the colonial era and that are based on whose community is best represented in politics and whose is not. And it is the Creoles who suffer the most at that point in Mauritian history, attesting to the racially-divided Mauritian state that finds it difficult to achieve what Sir Hilary Blood had already termed a “national unifying principle”²⁸⁸, to creating an “imaginary us”²⁸⁹ and thence to bringing cohesion and true peace: “Regarding the Creoles, they have few opportunities to match the efforts of the other groups. [...] Throughout the

²⁸³ The Creoles’ situation in Mauritius proves Trouillot’s argument about the “unthinkable”²⁸³ slave story: Princes’ conceptions of the world are limited to what is “thinkable”, and they are thus unable of imagining the slave descent as an individual capable of anything else but to constantly live in a state of servitude).

²⁸⁴ A term developed by Rose Boswell and that has become commonly used in Mauritian politics to explain the deplorable plight of some sections of the Creole community.

²⁸⁵ Mixture of *Reggae* and *Sega*

²⁸⁶ Kaya is rumoured to have been killed by Indo-Mauritian policemen, in custody.

²⁸⁷ Esman, M. (1997) *Public Administration, Ethnic Conflict and Economic Development*. Public Administration Review. Vol. 57 (6), p.528

²⁸⁸ Blood, H. (1957) ‘Ethnic and Cultural Pluralism in Mauritius’, In *Ethnic and Cultural Pluralism in Inter-Tropical Countries*. Brussels, International Institute of Differing Civilisations. p.359

²⁸⁹ Bunwaree, S. (2000) quoted by the Observatoire Réunionnais des Arts, des Civilisations et des Littératures dans leur Environnement. Article available online at http://laboratoires.univ-reunion.fr/oracle/documents/malcoml_chazal.html

1990s, one of the most pressing public issues in Mauritius was the cluster of social problems called *le malaise créole*, the “Creole ailment” [...] Social change has been rapid in Mauritius since the mid-1980s, leading to a significant improvement of standards of living and educational achievements. In this process, it has become clear that the Creoles have been lagging behind”²⁹⁰.

The island unfortunately remains at the turn of the 21st century (and decades after Independence) a nation divided according to ethnic origins that are dictated by colonisers: arbitrary colonial identities ‘manufactured’ by colonial masters are maintained and distinguish between various ethnic (or racial) subdivisions of Mauritius. The Mauritian population remains divided into broad the categories of Hindus, the Muslims, the Chinese, and anybody else who does not fit in those categories is referred to as member the General Population – a culturally open category that also comprises Creoles. In fact, successive Mauritian governments have not only maintained ethnic subdivisions on the island, but have promoted it, through implementing cultural centres that ought to preserve the cultural values of groups. Such groups include the African cultural centre for the Creole community; the Islamic cultural centre for the Muslims; the Telegu cultural centre for the Telegu community, and the Chinese cultural centre, amongst a number of other centres. The state also promotes a series of Speaking Unions so as to preserve the ancestral mother tongue of the various ethnicities on the island, including the Speaking Unions for Marathi, Telegu, Mandarin, Creole and Bhojpuri²⁹¹. Although Mauritians tolerate each other, are exposed to a broad set of cultural practises that allow them to practise cultural relativism and to learn from each other²⁹², does the maintenance of such ethnic-based centres and unions not promote difference and division? Are such arbitrary divisions not furthering communalism in Mauritius instead of permitting the creation of a truly unified nation?

The ethnic divisions found in Mauritius are those purposeful separations that serve during the era of colonialism, as means of preventing the masses’ unification against the oppressive

²⁹⁰ Eriksen, T.H. (1989) *Communicating Cultural Difference and Identity: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Mauritius*. Oslo: University of Oslo Press. Occasional Papers in Social Anthropology, Vol. 16

²⁹¹ Indian language usually associated with the Indian state of Bihar

²⁹² Mauritians ethnicities indeed live a hybrid lifestyle, taking from other cultures, learning and re-enacting food practices, clothing practices etc. It is not unusual to find a Mauritian of European eating Indian food, for example. It is also not unusual to find an Indo-Mauritian dress like a European on an everyday basis, or eat a French croissant for breakfast. Mauritians are socialised in a large cultural melting pot

system²⁹³. Reflected in the various instances of communal violence that occur since the 1960s in Mauritius, the possibility of ethnic divisions is proof that the ruling elite has not yet achieved governance systems²⁹⁴ that accommodate all groups and their aspirations. Without such ‘decolonised or ‘decolonial’²⁹⁵ unifying governance systems, the island cannot create an enduring platform for diverse identity groups to cooperate and compete on par. It is important to understand that the great moment of Mauritian Independence does not bring about an end to colonialism or to its legacies: Mauritius does not propose to endorse decolonial national unity: it does not contest its colonial past and instead draws from the very colonial linguistic, political, social and economic structures and violence to define its present and its historical roots, proving that like their colonial predecessors, the ruling elite of Mauritius remain economically, politically and socially dependent upon the force of coloniality. “The term post-colonialism — according to a too-rigid etymology — is frequently misunderstood as a temporal concept, meaning the time after colonialism has ceased, or the time following the politically determined Independence Day on which a country breaks away from its governance by another state”²⁹⁶. Even during the era of post-independence, a large part of the Mauritian population remains caught in a tragic paradox where they are liberated from colonial oppressors, but remain trapped in forms of misrule, exploitation and marginalisation – depending on their ethnic identities – that stem from the colonial era and that are only reinforced by liberation leaders²⁹⁷.

The ‘colonial’ behaviour of Mauritian leaders is further evident and pervasive in the ways in which Princes propel – for decades following Independence - their nation-building processes and policies, whilst not denying the “importance of Europe” in Mauritian history-making, and in the economy. Needing to exert their authority whilst enacting both nationalist and

²⁹³ Shillington, K. (1989) *History of Africa*. Revised Edition. New York: St. Martin’s Press. p.356; we must remember that such ethnic divisions are further reinforced due to the creation of artificial state borders in the African continent.

²⁹⁴ Political, economic, social, and cultural governance systems

²⁹⁵ As have wished many African liberation leaders, to free the mind of Africans

²⁹⁶ Gilbert, H. and Tompkins, J. (1996) *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics*, Routledge

²⁹⁷ As seen in the controversial cases of (pro-opposition or pro-other party) journalists who are graciously dismissed from their posts in Mauritius²⁹⁷, it is clear that the country is not completely pro-equality and pro-democracy: the media is censored and marginalised voices are muffled in order to propagate a filtered and buoyant image of Princes. Such practice only proves that post-independent leaders run their state as if it were theirs, reproducing selfish, often undemocratic and exploitative behaviour possible in the colony that boost ethnic division, centralisation of power, underrepresentation of subaltern groups, corruption in state institutions, limited access to land and property rights, social welfare benefits – all those forms of policies that are calculated and internalised during the colonial period and that continue in the form of the lack of neutrality of the post-independent Mauritian state and its endorsement of inter-identity competition who manipulate and maintain colonial-type group and ethnic identities to foster their own political power

economic policies that spur development, Princes choose to alter the social, economic and political, if not the psychological structures present in Mauritius, by favouring the myths and conditions about the Mauritian idyll set up during the colonial system that allow political leaders to consolidate and legitimise their power without exposing the realities and violence of the oppressive regime. The Mauritian elite seem to recognise the crucial role that the myth of a peaceful multicultural microcosm may play in the international arena. Speaking of Mauritian nationalism and its link to capitalism, Collen explains: “Nationalism, devotion to your nation, in the time of the anti-colonial struggle became the battle-cry of anti-colonialism – where the struggle was led by pro-capitalist forces, which is almost everywhere – and was nonetheless seen to be a progressive movement. The imperialists, in their wisdom and self-interest, saw that new nation states emerging from their colonies were in their ultimate interests, too, and they generally conceded independence to nation states – even organized rebellions to form them (many of us saw the classic film *Queimada* last week by Gillo Pontecorvo, starring Marlon Brando and Evaristo Marquez, showing the paid British agent fomenting revolution against in effect the Spanish colonizers, just as *Lawrence of Arabia*, also a famous film, shows this, too in a later era) to create new nation states that could slot in to the capitalist world system. The dominant sections of the bourgeoisie knew that this type of organization, the nation state, favours capitalism, and often favours it better than colonialism, they set up nation states. The USA, as a capitalist nation state, fomented anti-colonial rebellion wherever it could in the interests of its supposed free trade”.²⁹⁸ Magical representations of the peaceful multicultural population surrounded by beaches and isolated from the violence of the rest of the world are further enforced to shape the ways in which foreigners understand and ‘buy into’ the history, geography and development of the island of Mauritius; tolerance becomes an enforced political virtue and ethnic conflicts are made invisible to the international community, silenced by Mauritian Princes; and the violent past is incessantly deconstructed and reconstructed it in the present, in ways that affect future and present understandings of the ‘Mauritian essence’ and the realities of ‘new’, post-Independence Mauritius. Whilst it would seem that Mauritianness is engineered only through political adages and ideologies, it is crucial to understand the role of Princes in seeking to create a stronger national platform by simultaneously manipulating national memory. In this sense, the promise made at Independence by the Mauritian political elite to move towards a free and better future is not simply a form of memory turned towards the past, but evokes a

²⁹⁸ Collen, L. and Lallah, R. (12 March 2012) *Nationalism: No Anti-Dote to Communalism or Racism, nor to Imperialism*. LALIT Conference on Strategy

form of forgetfulness purposefully turned towards the future, as would suggest Arendt²⁹⁹. They grasp and reshape the Mauritian history and the symbolic value of the past, whilst concentrating on touristic and commercial activities that aim at reinforcing (colonial) national symbols, myths and values, focusing on an almost-idyllic and fantastic past of transnational migration, heroes and freedom³⁰⁰ - all part of the Mauritian heritage industry and 'tourism imaginaries' that promote a form of 'tourist nationalism'³⁰¹, and further re-imagine and re-create Mauritius in the post-independence era as the picture-perfect image of what it is, in fables and myths.

4.5. Packaged Identity

Because Mauritius relies on European markets to sustain the local tourism industry (in which the island imaginary has been very well entrenched), and because they seek to maintain the 'ideal community' imagined by their colonisers, Princes silence and deny, especially from post-Independence Mauritian history, any remnants of pain. A packaged Mauritian nationality, imagined at the heart of the nation's soul, is used relentlessly, as a means of attracting tourists: it is an identity for sale. As Horne argues, nationality is "[...] one of the principle colourings of the tourist vision"³⁰². In this light, the tourist sector in Mauritius promotes the Indo-Mauritian political agenda of attracting foreign exchange earnings, by selecting certain aspects of the past, and specifics of a tropical life as if they were "a unified phenomenon representative of the nation"³⁰³. What is represented or sold is continuity or an extended practice of the colonial imaginary, which serves the tourist and serves to create an imagined Mauritian community. It is important to understand that, in the face of international competition and independence from the British protectorate, Mauritian leaders have no choice but to recycle the kinds of colonial representations that re-figure Mauritius as island-paradise, obscuring its existence as a real place that harbouring a distinct society and a complex history with a multiplicity of cultures, politics and a booming economy. As Said reminds us, "we would not have had an empire itself...without important philosophical and

²⁹⁹ Arendt, H. (1968) 'What is Freedom?' In Arendt, H. *Between Past and Future*. London: Penguin Books. Pp.143-171

³⁰⁰ Kontolaimos, P. (n.d) *From Nationalism to the Future: Heritage Management Practices in Greece as a Means for Reproduction and Reshaping of Identities*. Conference Abstracts National Technical University of Athens

³⁰¹ Pritchard, A., and Morgan, N. (2007) 'De-centring Tourism's Intellectual Universe, or Traversing the Dialogue between Change and Tradition, In Ateljevic, I., Pritchard, A. and Morgan, N. (2007) *The Critical Turn in Tourism Studies*: Innova and Morgan. pp.17-21

³⁰² Horne, D. (1984) *The Great museum: The Re-presentation of History*. London: Pluto

³⁰³ Walsh, K. (1990) *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post-modern World*. London: Routledge. p.178

imaginative processes at work in the production as well as the acquisition, subordination, and settlement of space”³⁰⁴. Socially-spatialised during the colonial period as that land of escape, adventure and power, Mauritius is also locked in a similar large-scale creation of transnational spheres, classified in a series of discursive strategies, which appropriate and discipline the national Mauritian memory (made by Indo-Mauritians). To be ‘sold’, Mauritius cannot be represented as the highly divided, at times violent and culturally-empty space that it is during and after colonialism: it is instead commodified through unreal and non-modern aesthetic of the isolated island, in an attempt to increasing global competition within the tourist sector.

Rather than marketing the distinct Mauritian cultures and ethnicities, tourist resorts, for instance, create products and spaces in which an apparently idyllic and luxurious period of the Mauritian history is designed and performed³⁰⁵. Tourist brochures and official tourism proclamations provide ample evidence of the pervasiveness of the colonial narrative of the island imaginary in Mauritius. The Sugar Beach resort in Mauritius, for instance, is designed on a colonial plantation space, where a colonialist aesthetic is displayed and upon which tourists are encouraged to perform through and re-enact the colonial period. The reality of this period is not truthfully re-enacted, and instead, is reproduced to portray a period of calm, grace and leisure, rather than one of pain, suicide, deportation, slavery, death, rape and exploitation. This purified and filtered adaptation is largely unchallenged by Mauritians, and is maintained by Indo-Mauritian leaders: it de-politicises the nation’s history, presenting the history of colonialism as a period of leisure, rather than one of severe exploitation. The Mauritian tourist industry constructs a decor that conforms to colonial tastes of luxurious lifestyles and quiet and depoliticised spaces that are an opportunity to be part of a ‘piece of paradise’. Any unwanted ‘otherness’ is rejected in such spaces: noise, technology, trade and politics are kept at bay, and perpetrate the designed alteration of the island imaginary³⁰⁶. The Mauritian heritage provides a strong marketing strategy and platform, which defines the Mauritian identity through a few, careful and discriminatory stereotypes of peoples, places and myths. At times, and within its contemporary colonial spaces, Mauritius concentrates on

³⁰⁴ Walsh, K. (1990) *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post-modern World*. London: Routledge. p.178

³⁰⁵ Allen, R.B. (1999) *Slaves, Freedmen, and Indentured Labourers in Colonial Mauritius*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

³⁰⁶ Hoelscher, S. and Alderman, D.H. (September 2004) *Memory and Place: Geographies of a Critical Relationship*. Departments of American Studies and Geography, University of Texas. Social & Cultural Geography. Vol. 5 (3), p.348

promoting a ‘touristified indigenous and tropical’ heritage – a form of resource nationalism - through such elements as Africanised music (*séga*), dance (*séga*) and clothing (over-amplified and exaggerated stereotypes of ‘tropical African island’ clothing including feathers and animal skin), which fashion the tourist’s experience, revealing a colonial and tropical past that can be recognised.

The present colonial re-production of a tropical ‘indigenous’ heritage presents a timeless lifestyle, which is sold as more fulfilling than the ‘otherness’ of Mauritius. ‘Indigenous’ life embodies the essence of the Mauritian nationhood in the tourist industry, providing a physical and experiential link with Mauritius and its people. And it is important to remember that there is no ‘indigenous’ Mauritianness³⁰⁷. The realities and identities of the multiplicities of Mauritian ethnicities are necessarily needed when selling Mauritianism and the myth of heaven on earth – what tourists need and wish to experience is what ought to be sold. In fact, if Mauritians were to sell their ‘true’, non-indigenous, less ‘Africanised’ unachieved identities, Mauritius would probably not attract many tourists. After all, who would want to buy an island imaginary where trade, economy and politics are stable, and where the high-tech industry is booming? The island has to sell a type of nationalism dependent on historical tragedies and representations. Although tourist nationalism does not necessarily portray one’s full nationalism and identity, it is the most common and most profitable way to sell one’s culture. People become commodities – almost as if they were merely bodies for sale, making Mauritius guilty of dark tourism³⁰⁸. Defined as “visitation to places where tragedies or historically noteworthy death has occurred and that continue to impact our lives”³⁰⁹, dark tourism, or thanatourism, is Mauritius’s ‘dirty little secret’: it thrives on the tragedies of the Mauritian history to envisage Mauritianness, a “collectively imagined junction of all that was known or knowable”³¹⁰ of life before and after Mauritian Independence. But such imagined community only allows for a fantasy of historical knowledge about Mauritians remembered in the service of the ‘Prince’ and his Princedom. The memories of that type of Mauritianness - this ‘touristic’ way of imagining the peoples of Mauritius - also erases the pain and grief endured through of the brutalities and injustices of the catastrophe of slavery, deportation and

³⁰⁷ Hoelscher, S. and Alderman, D.H. (September 2004) *Memory and Place: Geographies of a Critical Relationship*. Departments of American Studies and Geography, University of Texas. Social & Cultural Geography. Vol. 5 (3), p.348

³⁰⁸ Seaton, A. (1996) *From Thanatopsis to Thanatourism: Guided by the Dark*. International Journal of Heritage Studies. Vol. 2, pp.234–244

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*,

³¹⁰ Richards, T. (1993) *The Imperial Archive and the Fantasy of Empire*. London: Verso

colonialism. Tourist nationalism only blurs the line between how to remember Mauritians and what their individual or ethnic identities are: memory practices define the Mauritian identity as much as the idea of Mauritianness can define memory of the past³¹¹, forcing individuals to accept subjective representations of their 'self', locking them in ways to imagine themselves. Consequently, the tourist industry in Mauritius only constructs people's reality and prevents them from being anything else than what they are 'supposed to be'. But once such a supra-identity is established, individuals are forced to revise their 'self', in order to be part of the established, the normative and normalised way of being. If one wants to fit in the Mauritian society, one has to oneself to adapt, and do what is said to be 'Mauritian' tradition, Mauritian identity markers. Despite context and circumstance, one has to - to be called a 'true' Mauritian - show a semblance of knowing Creole, even if it is not their mother tongue; one may have to be able to recognise the *séga*³¹² as inheritance; and one may have to understand the Mauritian's love for the *rougaille poisson sale*³¹³. Because one is born in Mauritius, aspects of one's identity (identity markers) – what one likes, what one dislikes, the language one speaks, the food one prefers, and one's social life – have to be altered, if one wants to 'fit in' and be a full member of the collectivity of 'true' Mauritians. Disagreeing with the consensus, with the established supra-identity would make one a traitor, a fake, and a snob, as is often said of Mauritians who choose to be otherwise. Thus, whilst memory practices can shape one's identity, it is undeniable that the mythical supra-identity has the capability of shaping individual identities and to limiting, at the same time, the capabilities, rights and opportunities of people.

Identification and memory practices enforced through the (colonial) tourist industry – practices that are altered and performed to serve in validating and authenticating consensual notions of the Mauritian past - contradict the Chazalian notion of the perfect pluralistic community. The tourism imaginary, closely entwined with the imperial project and colonialism³¹⁴, not only defines how to remember the (post-independence) experience but also determines and fixes both the tourist and the 'toured other', locking the latter in

³¹¹ Gillis, J. R. (1994) 'Memory and Identity: The history of a relationship', In Gillis, J.R. *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. pp. 3-40

³¹² Mauritian folk music and dance

³¹³ Salted snoek fish in tomato sauce

³¹⁴ Pritchard and Morgan Pritchard, A., & Morgan, N. (2007) "De-centring Tourism's Intellectual Universe, or Traversing the Dialogue between Change and Tradition". Pp.11-21

subjective identities that are always inherently colonial in nature³¹⁵. As such, it may be explicable why slave descendants, members of the General Population, remain in such positions that only expect them to drive trolleys and serve tourists, always as the subaltern working for ‘superior beings’ in a subservient manner. The post-independent Mauritian government has not developed differently from its colonial predecessor, and the General Population remains the underclass, the underdog – the exploited community. If, as states the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, engraved on a plate placed in front of the municipal theatre in Port Louis, expressing ethnic equality in Mauritius, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights...and no one has the right to treat you as a slave nor should you make anyone your slave,” why does the Creole population remain locked in slave-like identities? Are such marginalised identities not proof of the difficulty for the Mauritian government to creating the ‘rainbow nation’, to providing true equality and opportunities to all those who are citizens of Mauritius?

4.6. Conclusion

Commonly pursuing the ideal of living “as one people, as one nation”³¹⁶, nation-building strategies seem highly positive and constructive, but it has been difficult a task to homogenise groups of plural societies such as that of Mauritius, and to forge in each of the diverse groups and individuals, the feeling that they ought to belong together. The state has tried numerous times attempted to forging the rainbow nation, but such unsolved factors as the lack of equal opportunity and good governance have led to ethnic conflicts and tensions in the island, thence preventing the achievement of the rainbow nation. (Idyllic) Mauritianism, one must understand, has been as much an ephemeral phenomenon as it is a modestly successful attempt to forging the rainbow that symbolises it, and that there are differing expectations and reasons to explain the need to forge, maintain and consolidate the true Star of the Indian Ocean – the Stella Clavisque Maris Indici. However, as Archbishop Desmond Tutu explains, and as quoted earlier in this thesis, “[Experience worldwide shows that if you do not deal with a dark past such as ours, effectively look the beast in the eye, that beast is not going to lie down quietly, it is going as sure as anything, to come back and haunt you horrendously.”³¹⁷ Could Tutu be right? Could it be that Mauritius has sought Mauritianism

³¹⁵ Tucker, H. and Akama, J. (2009) ‘Tourism as Postcolonialism’, In Jamal, T. and Robinson, M. *The SAGE Handbook of Tourism Studies*. Los Angeles: Sage. p.510

³¹⁶ Phrase of the Mauritian national anthem

³¹⁷ Cited in Goldstone, R. (22 January 1997) *Justice as a Tool for Peacemaking: Truth Commissions and International Criminal Tribunals*. Hauser Lecture, New York University

without effectively looking “the beast into the eye”³¹⁸ first? And should Mauritius finally deal with its dark past, could the beast of the Mauritian inability to forge comradeship “lie down quietly”³¹⁹?

³¹⁸ Cited in Goldstone, R. (22 January 1997) *Justice as a Tool for Peacemaking: Truth Commissions and International Criminal Tribunals*. Hauser Lecture, New York University

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*,

Chapter 5: The Third Adage of Mauritianism

5.1. Introducing Truth-seeking in Mauritius

In light of the mitigated or modest success of the previous nationalist strategies (discussed in Chapter Four - the difficult construction of Stella) that ought to have brought peace through unity and multiculturalism, would consolidating the nation and nation-building not require a new set of approaches to help achieve a truly idyllic rainbow nation? Is it not crucial to change the mind-set of the entire Mauritian population, through institutional reforms that review the status of all ethnicities and create a truly equal society? Is it not crucial that Mauritius, as suggests Tutu, “look the beast in the eye”³²⁰ in order avoid that the factors preventing the maintenance of perfect Mauritianism “come back and haunt” Mauritians “horrendously”³²¹?

5.2. The Equal Opportunity Act of 2008

Echoing Marks and Engels’ ‘typical politicians’, Princes choose to “make their own history but not of their free will; not under the circumstances they themselves have chosen but under the given and inherited circumstances with which they are directly confronted”³²². Because contemporary multi-ethnic Mauritius still has not been able to achieve a well-defined and unchallenged cultural policy - a common sense of Mauritianism and a peaceful Chazalian community that is not constantly rioting against the various forms of misrule and broken promises of Princes - the Government has had to rely on the implementation of a new set of policies in the first decade of the 21st century. ‘Learning’ from the inadequacy of the first two attempts, Princes devise a third adage – one that they should have probably attempted first - through which the incomplete and contradictory first and second adages are to be reconciled in order to preach the virtues of equality and unity in diversity. Princes first set up the Equal Opportunity Act in 2008, an Act highly praised by Mauritians, which ought, as is explained in the Equal Opportunity Bill presented by the Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, to promote ethnic, political and economic equality to all Mauritians, in all sectors and in all public services³²³. The Mauritian government, it is a fact, has never stopped its quest for a

³²⁰ Cited in Goldstone, R. (22 January 1997) *Justice as a Tool for Peacemaking: Truth Commissions and International Criminal Tribunals*. Hauser Lecture, New York University

³²¹ *Ibid.*,

³²² Marks, K. and Engels, R. (1991) *Selected Works: the English Brumaire of Napoleon*. Moscow, Progress Press. p.95

³²³ Such as the equal access to education, jobs and the opportunity to equal social justice, rights amongst others

truly peaceful nation (whatever the motive behind is, whether it is to promote tourism or out of true concern for its population), and through the Equal Opportunity Act, only reinforces its wish to provide equal opportunity, so that all prosper and no one is left behind. Although the implementation of the Act is delayed³²⁴, the state remains confident that it will, once practised, consolidate the Mauritian nation. The enforcement of the Act however requires that effective leadership be set up and that all understand their equal place in the Mauritian society: the Act endorses the multiplicity of visions about what comprises the Mauritian essence, but such a diversity of groups needs to be homogenised, to be levelled so as to avoid the communal divisions brought about by the first and second adages through which some had unfair access to opportunities.

5.3. Looking the Beast in the Eye

The Mauritian Government seems at that point in Mauritian history³²⁵ to (finally) have found a route to enforcing the third adage, and embark on a nationalist wave to homogenising the nation. Through the use of a Truth and Justice Commission (TJC), the Mauritian Government imposes the institutional discourse of truth-recovery to (purposefully) expose the one ‘true’ Mauritian history³²⁶ and to uncover factual truth about the abuses that had occurred during slavery and indenture in Mauritius. Not yet the African success story that it has been advertised as, in that it still relies on the permanence and continuity of the era of colonialism in order to sustain its political endeavours, Mauritius seeks to examine more than 300 years of human rights violations and abuses, and the legacy of slavery and indenture in Mauritius, whilst being responsible for determining appropriate measures to be extended to descendants of slaves and indentured labourers. The TJC is established to deal with past wrongs, to “look the beast in the eye”³²⁷ and prevent their future occurrence, truth commissions emerge from political transition as a mechanism for demonstrating a break from the violent past. As explains Ramgoolam, “It is the legitimate expectation of everyone to know our true history. It is only after we have been faced with this reality that we can consolidate unity in our country. It is important therefore that we recognise our past history and lay that past to rest so that we

³²⁴ Due to the administrative difficulties in implementing such an Act in Mauritian Law

³²⁵ Officially, 2008 marks the beginning of various processes that would lead to a Mauritian Truth Commission, but talks about such a tool of political justice and transition would have probably started before 2008.

³²⁶ TJC Report (2011) Vol.1

³²⁷ Cited in Goldstone, R. (22 January 1997) *Justice as a Tool for Peacemaking: Truth Commissions and International Criminal Tribunals*. Hauser Lecture, New York University

can move on to reconciliation, justice and national unity.”³²⁸ In 2008, in place of the possibility of a multitude of identities encouraged through multicultural nationalism, a single identity that is grounded and located in Mauritius is sought (once again). Citizens of Mauritius, regardless of background, political affiliation, motherland, caste, class and social differences, are to construct a collective memory and a national master narrative that may help to socialise citizens and push them to internalising certain collective values - a collective mode of identification that is less ephemeral and less banal than those enforced through the adages of unity and diversity.

To this end, the new collective mode of identification needs to be legitimised as truth, and thence has to be enforced through such institutions that are not easily challenged.³²⁹ Produced through calculated alterations that ought to show only fragments of a past reality in an attempt to define history in the present and prescribe the future, such a truth (the original and unique truth) ought to help construct a group identity, a narrative of the present that all individuals of the group can understand, accept, and connect with. It can be understood as that type of truth that may help shape a shared and comprehensive story by providing the opportunity for political, social and perhaps even psychological transition from Tutu’s “dark past” to a legitimate present (by underlining and forgetting events of the past as has done the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and as proves the abundant critical literature produced about it³³⁰). In passing the TJC into law, the Assembly of the Government of Mauritius follows the footsteps of various other countries committing to the right to know as customary international law, in the hope of preventing future injustices³³¹, to mark a break with the past, or to prove that they do feel responsible to prevent such abuses in the present and future. Accountability and the prevention of violence become in 2008 in Mauritius, part of the ‘post-independent’³³² political arena in which truth recovery is the most important non-judicial mechanism to dealing with the past. The proposal of such a truth – one that all Mauritians may relate to – is believed to help heal the wounds of the past: “Will apologies and forgiveness heal the wounds of the past? Some believe so...TJC

³²⁸ TJC Report (2011) Vol.1, p.1

³²⁹ As prove the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, now a national and forensic archive about the violent South African past.

³³⁰ An example of such literature is that produced by Heidi P. Grunebaum and Yazir Henry

³³¹ Eighth annual report and list of States which, since 1 January 1985, have proclaimed, extended or terminated a state of emergency, presented by Mr. Leonardo Despouy, Special Rapporteur appointed pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/37, U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/1995/20/Corr.1 (1995).

³³² That is, if there is such a thing as ‘post’ colonial, in Mauritius.

invites Mauritians to continue uncovering the Truth, and not to forget that Injustice can always recur and that Mauritians must be vigilant.”³³³

The TJC provides an opportunity for citizens of Mauritius to share, reveal and confirm the violence and wrongs of the colonial era, and subsequently, a foundational narrative, an empirical mode of codifying “the history of a period”, as explains Wilson,³³⁴ based on the imperative that the horrors of the past should not be repeated. It offers a framework for the legitimisation of a national master narrative that portrays the present that is advertised (by politicians) as the best outcome, as the best possibility emerging from events of the past. Such forward-looking strategies, explains Hamber, “can play a vital forward-looking role. The TJC can thence symbolically represent a collective willingness to deal with and part from the past, having a shared memory and a common identity as a traumatised people. Furthermore, the Commission also makes concrete recommendations and seeks the implementation of specific policies that both symbolically and concretely announce a process of becoming something new, essential for Mauritius (a country that is coming out of conflict that is trying to shape a collective national identity). In the Princely agenda of creating a Mauritian nation, the entirety of the Mauritian history is to be re-imagined through new discourses that may help piecing together a fragmented and multi-cultural population (reflective of the past colonial divisions) by enforcing a singular narrative through which all recognise themselves in the present. The TJC’s purpose is to generate a singular truth about the systematic abuse and gross violations of human rights that had occurred during the colonial era. Such institutional memory practice further reflects the needs of their creator, the Princes, whose power is not simply political, but extends to the capacity to capture history, to shape national identity and rule over Mauritius and record its past; it is the power to name, power to blame, the power to shame, the power to mediate memories, power over access to memories, and power to shape collective memory. Since Princes are able to control memory and historical narratives, whilst manoeuvring the power that it wields, they are also able to control the Mauritian society, and determine what is to be remembered, how it is to be remembered, and what is to be forgotten”³³⁵.

³³³ TJC Report (2011) Vol.1, p.44

³³⁴ Wilson, R.A. (2001) *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Legitimizing the Post-Apartheid State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.16

³³⁵ Addison, J. and Hazareesingh, K. (1984) *A New History of Mauritius*. Rose-Hill: Editions de l’Océan Indien. See also Allen, R.B. (1999) *Slaves, Freedmen, and Indentured Labourers in Colonial Mauritius*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

5.4. Accuse All, Name None

The “Dutch, French and British”³³⁶ are, not to the surprise of Mauritians, identified as a guilty collectivity, the ‘usual’ guilty white colonial community.³³⁷ More interestingly - if not shockingly - the TJC report does not limit itself to accusing the white colonial community of being guilty of committing human rights abuses during slavery and indenture. Through its investigations, the TJC concludes to having to accuse all Mauritian collectivities of Indians financiers, Arab traders, and chiefs of African kingdoms of participating in the human rights abuses of the era of slavery and colonialism: “...Africans, Arabs and Indians [were] involved in the process of capture and internal selling, before slaves embarked at the ports of the exportation.” If all Mauritians – the collectivities of French, British, Arabs, Indians and Africans that make up Mauritius’s contemporary societal fabric - are guilty, no particular group can be judged for past violations and the pre-TJC division of the Mauritian population has to be revised and undone. Guilt about the Mauritian past, after the final Reports of the TJC, has to be equally shared by all those who partook in systematic abuse during slavery and indenture,³³⁸ and becomes, through the findings of the TJC, national – it becomes the guilt of a nation, a new possibility to imagine the Mauritian nation as an “us”, the “sons of their island”³³⁹ and a collectivity whose present identity is grounded in Mauritian soil, and, more importantly, in the colonial past, its discourses, myths, hierarchies and structures, and not in its post-independence present. Condemning a proposal by the Allies concerning collective guilt, in which all Germans, irrespective of whether they were fascist or anti-fascist and guilty or innocent, Arendt stresses the notion that we are all members of humanity, and are thus all are guilty of atrocities committed. In the words of Carl Jung, all Germans were actively, passively, consciously or unconsciously participants in the atrocities, that the “collective guilt” of the Germans was “for psychologists a fact, and it will be one of the most important tasks of therapy to bring the Germans to recognize this guilt.”³⁴⁰ Stigmatising a particular ethnicity would then only be an easy way out.

Although Arendt claims to be speaking in the name of humanity, it is easy to situate her voice - and relate what she says to the Mauritian nation and its particular instances of human rights

³³⁶ TJC Report (2011) Vol.1, p. 63

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.77

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.77

³³⁹ Chabbert: 2001, Preface, 11-15

³⁴⁰ Jung, C.G. (eds., 1989) ‘After the Catastrophe’, In *Essays on Contemporary Events: The Psychology of Nazism*, trans. R.F.C. Hull, Princeton: Princeton University Press. p.72

violations. By virtue of belonging to humanity, says Arendt, “men must assume responsibility for all crimes committed by men and that all nations share the onus of evil committed by all others”. Consequently, if all Mauritians participated in human rights abuses, they form a guilty nation, and no particular Mauritian ethnicity can thence be judged for past violations. The pre-TJC ethnic division of the Mauritian population has no reason to be, according to the TJC Report. It would indeed be improbable for such colonisers as Mahe de Labourdonnais, Pierre Poivre and General Abercrombie³⁴¹ to have carried out mass human rights violations alone, without the aid of a system - a structure of abuse that involved other persons. If the atrocities committed against people of colour are systematic and should not be attributed to white colonisers only, it is legitimate to identify the whole Mauritian nation as a fit subject for bearing the guilt of its members. French, British, Arabs, Indians and Africans of the colonial era are all guilty of mass atrocities against slaves and indentured labourers if they did not abstain from participation. Of course, the counter argument to such a statement is that it may not be possible to avoid the inhuman actions and decisions of those in charge. But political guilt encompasses the notion that each person in a community is guilty by virtue of being there, and being governed. It is guilt by association, guilt because, as Jaspers puts it, “*Es ist jedes Menschen Mitverantwortung wie er regiert wird*” (Everybody is co-responsible for the way he is governed)³⁴². According to this view, all those who did not abstain from participating in the chain of Mauritian slavery and indenture are politically responsible for the actions of colonisers. Jaspers describes a second type of guilt – one that is even more relevant to the Mauritian case and that Mauritians are to face, in the aftermath of publication the TJC Report. He argues that there are some situations in which solidarity requires that all humans endure the same fate.³⁴³ It is then appropriate that all collectivities of Mauritius, present at the time of slavery and indenture, endure the same guilt, supporting the notion of national guilt by association. Since those present - at the time mass atrocities were committed in Mauritius – did not assume solidarity with their compatriots, they are metaphysically guilty for the suffering of those who endured mass atrocities and the aftermath thereof. Jaspers describes of the German metaphysical guilt: “We did not go into the streets when our Jewish friends were led away; we did not scream until we too were destroyed. . . . We are guilty of being alive.”³⁴⁴

³⁴¹ Colonisers and first slave and indentured labour traders in Mauritius. Cited in Seetah, K. (2010) *Our Struggle. Mauritius: an Exploration of Colonial Legacies on an 'Island Paradise'*. Shima: The International Journal of Research into Island Cultures. Volume 4(1), pp.100-102

³⁴² Jaspers, C. (trans., 1947) *The Question of German Guilt*. E.B. Ashton. p.31

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.72

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.72

In a similar pattern, it does not seem – from the findings of the TJC - that all French, British, Arab, Indian or African collectivities resisted or tried to protect those that faced mass atrocities at the time of colonialism. All collectivities are as such, guilty for the suffering of their compatriots, those of their own ethnic group; those of similar ancestry – all share the same guilt.

5.5. Shared National Guilt

There is indeed something appealing about this stance: it encourages all Mauritian collectivities to confront their past and their ancestors' participation, guilt and shared guilt in atrocities of the colonial era, rather than to avoid it. Shared national guilt thence provides an avenue for erasing ethnicised guilt, without stigmatising any other collectivity. But, although such shared guilt seems a noble endeavour, one should expect collective guilt of the Mauritian nation to have profound effects on Mauritian culture, if not on politics and every other sphere of its society. One problem with imposing the notion of the collective guilt of the nation in Mauritius is about the notion of Mauritianism itself: who is included in the guilty Mauritian collectivity and who is not? As suggests the TJC, Mauritians “up to now, have lived with many myths and stereotypes of their real ancestry” because they have been “harassed by religious, political, social and cultural ‘leaders’ giving instructions on how they should behave, talk, dress because this is how certain communities are ‘supposed to behave’.”³⁴⁵ In other words, identities surrounding the notion of Mauritian nationalism have been imposed onto Mauritians. But the Mauritian nationality, as defined in the existing Constitution, cannot be limited and broken down only into two or three identities that include slaves (Africans), indentured labourers (Indians) and perpetrators of human rights violations under colonialism (Europeans). There exist in Mauritius, many more categories, many more groups of people that do not belong to the slave, indenture and white perpetrator groups. But since those identities have been muffled and submerged under broader ethnic categories, it is almost impossible to know who is and who is not slave, perpetrator or indentured labourer. To add to this problem is the act of *métissage*³⁴⁶, as stated in the TJC Report: “The Commission finds: The political decision to block public access to caste data has led to the effective closure of this public archive to the public, Mauritian historians and students and those of indentured ancestry”.³⁴⁷ There is no means of knowing who is purely Indian,

³⁴⁵ TJC Report (2011) Vol.1, p.449-450

³⁴⁶ Mixing of races

³⁴⁷ TJC Report (2011) Vol.1, p.450

African, French, British or Arab – who is at the core of the nation, and who ‘just happens to be there’, at the periphery of it. “It has been common in public and official discourse to demarcate, along clear lines, the slaves from indentured immigrants; yet, Mauritius at the time was not divided into these two groups: due to the extreme shortage of female immigrants, intermarriage and cohabitation occurred. Intercaste, interregional and interethnic marriages occurred, as evidenced by the family histories compiled. Many, if not most, Mauritian families have undergone a higher rate of métissage than they care to admit.”³⁴⁸ Mauritian collectivities, their past and their experiences are too multicultural, too divided, too different and too vast and varied to be reduced to a single possibility in history - that of a nation guilty of past atrocities. Of course, all may feel some forms of ‘Mauritianness’ in their identity, but using such feelings to fixing guilt seems reductive. As Jaspers explains, an entire nation cannot be criminal or “suffer heroic tragedy”.³⁴⁹ The TJC is perhaps wrong in enforcing such guilt onto all Mauritians. Implicit in its charge is the assumption that national guilt of Mauritians will be passed on to future generations. If such transgenerational guilt is enforced as endorsed and supported by the TJC already - all those born after the period of mass atrocities are also not free from guilt, whether political or metaphysical.

It is important to understand that the very possibility, need and enforcement of a truth commission in present-day Mauritius only supports the argument that the island has never been able to secure perfect nationalism and has never sought political transition that would free Mauritians from the shackles of a slave and indentured past, contrary to what some may argue. The country has never been able to transition from its traumatic past of human rights abuses and cannot prove to any mystical healing of colonialism and its legacies. It has never achieved symbolic closure and has never been able to form a true nation. Realising the need for reconciling the nation and avoiding to be removed from their privileged positions, Princes thence opt for the TJC - a paradigmatic international and common African model of how to deal with a violent past and heal the nation – or build one - to implement a new set of discourses that could re-construct the memory of Mauritian past of atrocity and human rights abuses, in order to create a platform that sustains and reinforces nation-building in the divided post-independent state. The Mauritian nation, like many others, is not a natural fact: it remains a political claim - a political category engineered by political elites - that is used to enforce a sense of belonging onto those who would have nothing in common. In that sense,

³⁴⁸ TJC Report, 2011, VOL 1, p.145

³⁴⁹ Jaspers, C. (trans., 1947) *The Question of German Guilt*. E.B. Ashton. p.41

Mauritius is no different from other African states that hold a truth commission and other institutional methods in order to re-writing national memory. The political history of the Mauritian state seeking to create a supra-identity that could be used to replace subnational and problematic identities is not very different from other nation-building strategies in colonised Africa. Nation-building may very well be the same story everywhere: it is one where political elites need to forge a homogenous nation in order to sustain their political and economic power; one whereby freedom fighters constantly have to find ways of justifying their status. It is a story of promises made at independence of forging a peaceful rainbow nation; it is a story of creating a collective psyche through discourses of reconciliation that subordinate individual stories, histories and memories. It is a story of maintaining the 'true' heir in his political throne and who attempts to re-writing national memory through the establishment of collective, national and institutionalised historical archives (truths): it is a master narrative that supports post-independence elites' power, ideals and agenda.

5.6. Remembering and Forgetting as One People, as One Nation

Mauritius is then but an example of a post-independent and multi-ethnic state that has to redefine itself, its past and its people, in order to build a nation. And its Princes are therefore no different from other political elites: there is no such thing as the Mauritian miracle that is very easily used to describe the (apparently peaceful but easily criticised and demystified) post-independent state of Mauritius. The Mauritian elite, like many others, have to acclaim the need to forget collectively, to move on from the past through an incessant and ongoing process of trial-and-error. As such, oblivion and invisibility have become necessary elements when narrating or re-writing the Mauritian past, to influence and shape historical and national consciousness – to shape a collective consciousness through which inhabitants of the island can perceive unity throughout time, and can assume a common 'soul', a 'self' that is capable of reproducing, recognising and remembering specific elements of the past that allow their present self. Mauritius needs to exist in the mind of its inhabitants as that geographic space that binds them in a common brotherhood and a common era, whether it is the past or the future. To this end, it is understandable why Mauritius opts for policies of nation-building - through institutional truth-seeking processes and pacts of oblivion - in order to solve the problems associated with a violent past, thence starting the process of political transition and collective memory-making. Since "national memory ... is constituted by different, often opposing, memories that, in spite of their rivalries, construct common denominators that

overcome on the symbolic level real social and political differences to create an imagined community”³⁵⁰, it is improbable that the state allowing for memory forged through a truth commission be questioned or challenged. On the contrary, national or collective memory is celebrated and even protected, consequently legitimising state institutions, symbols and myths of national cohesion, and favours the socialisation (which seems more of an indoctrination, a manipulation, and a violent and forceful process) of citizens of a state to be part of the nation. National memory - and its role in engineering the Mauritian nation – is about truths and silences used in shaping shared national histories and discourses that make of the inhabitants of the post-independent heterogeneous state neither victims nor perpetrators...just ‘brothers’.

However, in proposing a single truth, ‘memory-makers’ (Princes) privilege a particular official Mauritian narrative and archive, and systematically ignore private and other stories, ruling out flavours of authenticity, and creating an ‘original order’, a ‘true’ archive of the past and of life in Mauritius. Through the TJC, it becomes possible for the state to enforce and endorse certain discourses, silencing some memories and advertising others in order to administer new possibilities and renounce others: the past is narrated and constructed as ‘forensic’ discourse through which one can read the ‘true’ past (and that has the effect of reconstructing such violent pasts as that of Mauritius, and re-narrating history in the transitional present, whilst silencing various other memories, as a means of founding future reconciliation, bringing together the key protagonists of who makes memory and who makes history.) The TJC does indeed allow for the contestation of the historical narratives and memories, but only replaces them with another form of incomplete narrative that allowed for specific discourses to be publicised, offering a consensual narrative around a single (most important) story – that of colonialism, victims and perpetrators, and as importantly, freedom-fighting. New leaders, in ways that are similar to previous ones, manipulate memories of the past in order to satisfy their current political agenda, creating a new single myth of the past, instead of supporting the multitude of historical voices. In this light, it is very plausible an argument that the post-independent (Southern African) arena of power relations, memory-making and state-citizen relationships is predictable and unchangeable, where the elite choose what is to be remembered and forgotten, and lead to the permanent reconstruction of the past

³⁵⁰ Confino, A. (1997) *Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method*. American Historical Review. Vol. 102(5). pp.1386-1403

that is associated with their current political interests.³⁵¹ As importantly, the Indo-Mauritian freedom-fighter, the Prince, the ‘heir’ to the Mauritian political throne needs to create a memory and discourse of the past that will allow him to reign: he therefore describes himself as the one who ‘knows’ what is best for his people, and he ‘knows’ how to speak for his people, legitimising his status, power and place in society, whilst disaggregating any form of opposition – as have done other post-independent (South African) leaders.

No post-independent (Southern African) leader is different; and no post-independence (Southern African) state is different. All employ the same tactics, ruse and policies, and all use the cause of the people to claim ownership and custodianship of the past, the present and the future. Because they have the political power to alter memories, discourses and adages, they can legitimise their position and desires, Princes can also ‘own Stella’ (the *Stella Clavisque Maris Indici*) as the African National Congress seems to own South Africa³⁵² - its past, present and future. In other words, those who fight for freedom are the custodians of memory, and are also the ones who have agency in making memory, or to naturalise and legitimise the latter. And whilst the process of legitimisation does indeed challenge previous ‘white’ narratives³⁵³, new leaders only enforce new master narratives – a political agency that now seems ‘typical’ in post-independent transitional Southern African states such as Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa, all employing new master narratives to explain the logistics and possibilities the post-independent state. The production of such narratives is however a necessary step for Mauritians to reconcile³⁵⁴: the TJC is (as are other truth commissions) designed after all, to address and redress the divisions amongst the various collectivities of Mauritius – the divisions within civil society itself. Such tensions or divisions characterise national social relations in Mauritius, and are present at community level, whereby ethnic groups composing the local Mauritian lived segregated because of their experience of the atrocities committed during the era of slavery and indenture. Thus, the way in which the TJC’s national reconciliation program defines the past is crucial in shaping the type of experience that was to reconcile the divided nation. Since the conflict amongst ethnicities is seemingly based on racial politics, which in turn, is based on frustrations and

³⁵¹ Connerton 1989; Halbwachs, M. (1992 [1951]) ‘The Social Frameworks of Memory’, *In On Collective Memory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

³⁵² Because the ANC is the South African ‘freedom-fighting’ party, it claims to be the only party that ‘is representative’ of the voice and the cause of the oppressed in the country.

³⁵³ Such as those that legitimised white supremacy and that were produced by the Apartheid state

³⁵⁴ Reconciliation here involves the avoidance of revenge and the achievement of peace whilst acknowledging who the perpetrators of past violence are.

assigned guilt about past atrocities, it is important that the TJC frames a ground that would be common to all Mauritians.

Part of the national reconciliation process is thence to re-create the macro narrative of the past, to “re-establish” the truth about the past atrocities – one whereby no Mauritian collectivity can accuse another, one whereby all Mauritians are as equally guilty. And although such narrative presents a danger of oversimplification of the Mauritian past of violence, the TJC’s attempt to tell its version of mass atrocities may force all Mauritians to face their past, and more importantly, it may serve to maintain the conditions for a more cohesive society. Even if individual perpetrators of the 1700s, 1800s and 1900s cannot be punished in Mauritius, the truth about all the collectivities that participated in mass atrocities may allow, in contemporary Mauritius, a sense of unity, not in diversity but in a shared experience, in shared guilt. In ‘re-establishing’ the truth about the past, the TJC does find a way to reconciling the divided Mauritian population, as if it were one group, one nation that shared collective responsibility for the abuses that occurred under slavery and indenture. The truth about such guilt is highly symbolic in Mauritius: it is an act of self-depreciation that all have to grasp (act that reduces ‘superior’ Mauritians to a lower status), in order to acknowledge the dignity of those that once suffered and the responsibility of those that did not abstain from the chain of slavery and indenture. The nation’s guilt, arising by virtue of a limited identification with the history of slavery and indenture on the island, may be a way for the population to admit, as a nation, to the effects of mass atrocities of the past onto the contemporary social fabric of Mauritius. Recognising that all are part of the same society that benefits from slavery and indenture may allow Mauritians to be part of social, economic and political changes in Mauritius – changes that will allow for a cohesive society, a peaceful one, and a truly national identity. Since the ‘new Mauritian’ truth seems to assume that national guilt of Mauritians will be passed on to future generations, all Mauritians will have to participate in consolidating the social fabric of Mauritius. And ethnic peace may thus be sustained by national guilt.

5.7. Conclusion

In light of the modest success of the previous nationalist strategies discussed in Chapter Four (the difficult construction of Mauritius) Princes have devised a third adage, through which the incomplete and contradictory first and second adages are to be reconciled in order to

preach the virtues of equality and unity in diversity. Mauritius is today undergoing a third attempt, a third wave of nation-building, further proof that of the complexities of Mauritianism and that the 'rainbow nation' has not yet been achieved. However, this third wave is different from past ones: Princes have undertaken consolidating the nation and nation-building through a new set of approaches that would "look the beast in the eye"³⁵⁵ so as to avoid that the factors preventing the maintenance of perfect Mauritianism "come back and haunt" Mauritians "horrendously"³⁵⁶. Such an approach will hopefully help achieve a truly idyllic rainbow through institutional reforms that review the status of all ethnicities and create a truly equal society.

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³⁵⁵ Cited in Goldstone, R. (22 January 1997) *Justice as a Tool for Peacemaking: Truth Commissions and International Criminal Tribunals*. Hauser Lecture, New York University

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*,

Chapter 6: General Conclusion

Mauritius, in many ways, is an African paradise, an economic miracle³⁵⁷. However, to what extent can one speak of Mauritius as an achieved social paradise too?

6.1. Introducing the True Mauritianism

Since the dawn of Independence, the Mauritian state has been confronted with the task of consolidating a sense of belonging in its people, allowing them to live freely, “in peace, justice and liberty”³⁵⁸. Through the adages of unity and diversity, leaders have sought to make of Mauritius a Motherland where all those who had suffered in the hands of colonial governments could seek refuge and live “as one people, as one nation”³⁵⁹. Yet, whilst the island’s capability for tolerance and its movement to a stable and successful economy are obvious, observable and are recognised around the globe, forging an idyllic Mauritian nation has proven difficult. Frustrated over the socio-economic and political issues that remain (for long and until today) unsolved by the state, Mauritians still call “for an all-encompassing and exclusive economic system which does not leave anybody lagging behind or in the gutter. We want the total eradication of poverty and the creation of opportunities for people to become self-sufficient”³⁶⁰. They still “call for a stop to all funding of religious and sectarian groups – the so-called socio-cultural organisations – which poison relations amongst the Mauritian people and often try to influence the power that be in their decision-making”³⁶¹. And they still wish for “[...] ethical principles to permeate society as a whole, and end to corruption”³⁶² and politico-financial scandals”³⁶³. Moreover, certain political parties speak directly to the cracks in the ‘rainbow nation’: they protest “Against Police Brutality”³⁶⁴; they claim that “The Constitution must be amended”³⁶⁵; and they explain how “disagreeing with the government

³⁵⁷ Nasion larkansiel is the creole translation for rainbow nation, typically used by Mauritian politicians to express the co-habitation of various ethnic groups on the island of Mauritius.

³⁵⁸ Phrase of the Mauritian national anthem.

³⁵⁹ Phrase of the Mauritian national anthem.

³⁶⁰ See Appendix 1 for Manifesto

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*,

³⁶² See Reuters online article on “Mauritius youth protest against corruption” accessed in August 2011 and retrieved again on the 1st of February 2013 at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/10/ozatp-mauritius-protest-idAFJOE7890DF20110910>

³⁶³ See Appendix 1 for Manifesto

³⁶⁴ Document published by LALIT on the 11th of June 2001 at <http://www.lalitmauritius.org/documents.php> accessed on the 15th of August 2011 and retrieved again on the 1st of February 2013

³⁶⁵ Collen, L. (20 November 2005) *Il Faut Amender la Constitution*. Le Dimanche Newspaper. Press clipping accessible online at <http://www.lalitmauritius.org/resources/documentcentre/LPC12026.001.jpg>
See Appendix 2

or the party line can lead to serious trouble”³⁶⁶, amongst other issues. In light of the contemporary Mauritian issues mentioned above, the achieved “new humanity” in Mauritius can be understood as a myth, an imagined community³⁶⁷. The Mauritian state has not fully been able to change the social fabric of Mauritius to make all Mauritians feel that they also belong together, and that they are as equally respected and acknowledged as are other ethnicities. Claiming to the completed ‘Mauritian rainbow nation’ is therefore unwarranted, since it is a society that is yet to be forged.

Following the mitigated success of the first two nation-building strategies, Mauritian leaders have devised a third adage, through which the incomplete and contradictory first and second adages are to be reconciled in order to preach the virtues of equality and unity in diversity. Mauritius is today undergoing a third attempt, a third wave of nationalism, further proof that of the complexities of Mauritianism and that the ‘rainbow nation has not yet been achieved. However, because this third wave is different from past ones, in that Mauritian leaders have undertaken consolidating the nation and nation-building through a new set of truth-seeking approaches that would “look the beast in the eye”³⁶⁸, institutional reforms that review the status of all ethnicities may, in time, provide a true opportunity to creating an equal Mauritian society.

6.2. The Mauritian Pact of Brotherhood

Incessantly and invariably Mauritian politicians have tried at least since 1968³⁶⁹ to actively deconstruct the violent past, and reconstruct it in the present, in ways that would affect future and present understandings of the ‘Mauritian essence’ and the present-day realities of ‘new’, post-Independence Mauritius. Mauritianness is sought through adages and ideologies that are meant to allow for and shape collective memory - a common platform, a bond. Since memories of the past of a nation are defined in the present, memory would work as an

³⁶⁶ Valayden, D. (11 October 2005) *From Stalin With Love*. L’Express Newspaper. See Appendix 3. Press clipping accessible online at <http://www.lalitmauritius.org/resources/documentcentre/LPC12036.001.jpg> and <http://www.lalitmauritius.org/resources/documentcentre/LPC12036.002.jpg>

³⁶⁷ Refer to Benedict Anderson’s theory of the imagined community

³⁶⁸ Cited in Goldstone, R. (22 January 1997) *Justice as a Tool for Peacemaking: Truth Commissions and International Criminal Tribunals*. Hauser Lecture, New York University

³⁶⁹ Mauritius gained its independence from Great Britain in 1968

interaction between forgetting and remembering, in order to form a collective framework, a shared framework of the Mauritian past.³⁷⁰

In an attempt to forging such framework, the Mauritian state has chosen to remember the past and perform it in the present, through setting up in 2008 the Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius. Because the nation-building discourse of such a Commission enforces social homogeneity, as says Hamber, “disparate individual memories”³⁷¹ are re-established as a single, official memory, an official version of the past that also represses other forms of remembering the past, achieving closure or even healing. Because the official memory of the past is, through truth commissions, ‘empirical’ and internationally recognised - and implies state-sponsored archival methods and processes that provide ‘truths’ about the past - it may not be easily challenged by citizens. Such methods and processes aim at the internalisation of certain values and perceptions of the past - into the collective consciousness, the subconscious, the psyche - that make people believe that what the state tells them is undisputable. Consequently, and as they accept collective ‘truths’ and perceptions of the past and of how they have come to exist, individuals associate their ‘self’ with the master narrative that, as implied in the term, narrates a story - a mode of identification - that justifies the unification of people into a cohesive group, a unit moving together in history: it is a narrative of continuity, of belonging and of origins that sculpts the path of the collectivity. It is a narrative through which past events are merged into a single narrative, engineering a single story about “common glories in the past”³⁷², and “a common will in the present”³⁷³, imposing new regimes of truth and repressing individual memories.

The TJC documents - offering forensic truth about the past - are a set of archives through which to re-figure the Mauritian past and its history of colonialism, and deal with it in order to sculpt the path of collectivity - collective identity and common history. Without such archives, Princes may not have the status or the power to enforce a new imaginary, a new adage of Mauritianism – that of a homogenous nation composed of persons who share a similar past. Because such imaginary is mandated by the state, remembering an incomplete,

³⁷⁰ Renan, E. (11 March 1882) *What is a Nation?* Lecture delivered at La Sorbonne University. Available at http://www.cooper.edu/humanities/classes/coreclasses/hss3/e_renan.html

³⁷¹ Hamber, B. (n.d) *Remembering to Forget: Issues to Consider when Establishing Structures for Dealing with the Past*. The Centre for the Study of Violence & Reconciliation

³⁷² Renan, E. (11 March 1882) *What is a Nation?* Lecture delivered at La Sorbonne University. Available at http://www.cooper.edu/humanities/classes/coreclasses/hss3/e_renan.html

³⁷³ *Ibid.*,

fractured or silenced past is not considered a controversial process (by the state at least), and is in fact highly acclaimed by leaders and memory-makers. And the TJC offers the possibility of a pact of denial, a means of presenting the violence of the colonial as something else, and placing it under a different light. The discourse about the past changes and is reclaimed by Princes who choose to re-figure it and create a (one-sided) historicity that may silence, once again, their misrule and the marginalisation practices that stem from the era of colonialism.

However, it is the essential element of Mauritian nation-building that all citizens of the island, above everything else, forget that their country was built on slavery and indentured labour. Mauritians need to suppress from collective memory certain past events, actions, feelings and ‘truths’, and secularise what had and had not taken place during the era of slavery and indentured labour³⁷⁴. Nietzsche argues that forgetting certain elements could be a solution to maintaining harmonious societies³⁷⁵ where peoples would be dedicated to the welfare of society and the state instead. But this dedication can fail in valorising a truthful and complete history by hiding and casting away elements of the past. In this sense, the promise made at Independence by the Mauritian political elite, to move towards a free and better future is not simply a form of memory turned towards the past, but evokes a site of forgetfulness turned towards the future, as would suggest Arendt³⁷⁶. The promise of a better future, not only looks to break society with the past, but seeks to revolutionise the present. And what allows one to re-begin is forgetfulness because every new action requires forgetfulness³⁷⁷. In this perspective, what allowed Mauritians to re-begin, to re-construct their past, the Mauritian society, and build a better, post-independent present, is forgetfulness. In this light, the Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius may very well help in forging a homogenous experience of Mauritianness that moves away from colonial legacies and ‘post-colonial’ injustices that remain possible in the present: it enforces forensic truth that produces a discourse that makes all inhabitants ‘brothers’, neither victim nor perpetrator, just neighbours in a ‘post-independent’ state. Even if it permits an official national history that is not coherent with individual memories and histories, the TJC serves to mediate and avoid the

³⁷⁴ Zamora L.P. (1997) *The Usable Past: The Imagination of History in Recent Fiction of the Americas*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.76-77

³⁷⁵ Nietzsche privileges the unconscious over consciousness. On the emergence of consciousness and its relation to the human animal’s humanization, socialization and civilization, see in particular Nietzsche

³⁷⁶ Arendt, H. (1968) ‘What is Freedom?’ In Arendt, H. *Between Past and Future*. London: Penguin Books. Pp.143-171

³⁷⁷ Nietzsche, F. (1997) *Untimely Meditations*. Trans. R.J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.62

reproduction of excessive racialised violence in the present, treating the memory of the past carefully, and only as a utilitarian and unproblematic transparent technology.

6.3. The Absolute Value of Collective Truth

If, as Zalaquett argues, truth must be “an absolute value”³⁷⁸ in healing the past, the Truth and Justice Commission of Mauritius should be commended for having continually pursued its most ‘absolute’ task. The Commission seeks the complete truth (whether it does achieve it or not) about the country’s past – a truth that allows for a greater narrative, a collective narrative about the past in which all Mauritians may fit their own experiences: the idealism brought forward by proponents of the TJC to unite the nation is then very possible. The TJC is also a process that is spearheaded in order to reduce lies or half-truths about past atrocity on the island and to avoid subsequent denials. In the words of Michael Ignatieff, the past is not a “sacred text which has been vandalised by evil men and which can be recovered and returned to a well-lit glass.”³⁷⁹ Rather, “the function of truth commissions, like the function of honest historians, is simply to purify the argument, to narrow the range of permissible lies.”³⁸⁰ The TJC therefore helps narrow the range of permissible lies around the history of past abuses on the island, and also narrows the range of truth revealed. Of course, there cannot be a single truth in such a divided nation, whereby all have a different memory and experience of the colonial past. But the generation of a greater narrative – one that merges all adages of unity, unity in diversity, amongst others - is perhaps a win-win situation as the TJC proposes that all Mauritians be treated equally on the issue of past atrocities. There can no longer be individual groups that are stigmatised or held to be better than others in Mauritius. Instead, the whole population has to be treated as equally responsible, and thence, of equal status, because they all have allowed for the occurrence of human rights abuses during the colonial era. Consequently, the whole Mauritian nation is stigmatised, as is the case in holding all Germans responsible for the Holocaust, all Hutus for killing their Tutsi compatriots, all Serbs for atrocities committed in Bosnia and all Turks for the Armenian genocide. By ‘accusing all and naming none’, the TJC may have found a better way to reconciling the divided Mauritian population, and deals with it as if it were one group that shared collective responsibility for the abuses that occurred under slavery and indenture.

³⁷⁸ Zalaquett, J. (1999) “Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation: Lessons for the International Community,” in Arnson, C.J. ed., *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. p. 348

³⁷⁹ Ignatieff, M. (1996) *Articles of Faith*. Index on Censorship. Vol. 5, p.113

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.113

6.4. Conclusion

Mauritius's colonial past is today a crucial framework for the legitimisation of a new national master narrative that portrays the present as the best outcome, as the best possibility emerging from events of the past: all Mauritians are part of a society that benefits from slavery and indenture. Because it enforces the notion that all Mauritians are equal, the TJC addresses critical issues that had for long been ignored by the state during the enforcement of the first two adages of Mauritianism, such as socio-economic inequality, *Le Malaise Creole* and the marginalisation of certain groups. This new discourse, proving to the fact of a mitigated success to forging Mauritian nationalism, may allow for changes in Mauritius that will perhaps finally create a cohesive society, a peaceful one, and a truly national identity. Since ethnic peace is to be sustained not through the national symbols and ethno-political affiliation promoted through the first two adages of nationalism but by national guilt, the new wave of Mauritianism will, with a bit of luck, not be as ephemeral and mitigated as the first two attempts. However, until a definitive and absolute national consciousness is forged, Mauritius must not be unduly revered as a perfect Chazalian nation, and the enthusiastic discourse of the 'rainbow nation' must be mitigated.

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Appendix 1: SEKI NOU LE

What we are calling for - Ce que nous voulons



Not sa: Partou akot ena enn mansyon Moris dan sa Manifes-la, sa konpran osi bann lezot zil kot aproprie (Rodrig, Agalega...)

NB: Wherever Mauritius is mentioned in this Manifesto, this also includes other islands where appropriate (i.e. Rodrigues, Agalega...)

A noter: A chaque fois que Maurice est mentionnée dans ce Manifeste, cela comprend aussi les autres îles (Rodrigues, les îles Agalega...)

1. Nou le enn lekonomi solider ki napa les personnn lor bor sime.

We're calling for an all encompassing and inclusive economic system which doesn't leave anybody lagging behind or in the gutter.

Nous prôtons une économie solidaire et égalitaire qui inclut tous les citoyens sans distinction aucune.

2. Nou le ki fer la povrete disparet enn fwa pou tou ek fer dimounn vinn otonom.

We want the total eradication of poverty and the creation of opportunities for people to become self sufficient.

Nous prôtons l'éradication complète de la pauvreté et l'introduction de mesures qui encouragent l'autosuffisance.

3. Nou le ki selebre nou diversite kiltirel, pa servi li pou diviz nou.

We call for the celebration and promotion of our cultural diversity and not use it as a divisive tool.

Nous voulons qu'on célèbre notre diversité culturelle plutôt que de l'utiliser pour nous diviser.

4. Nou le enn sistem ledikasyon pou tou dimoun ki viz zot lepanwisman, pa enn sistem iltra-konpetitif, bouraz de krann, zis akademik.

We are calling for an educational system that is fair and accessible to all, with the emphasis on self-realisation. We don't want one that is ultra competitive and focuses solely on elitism, cramming and academic ability alone.

Nous prôtons un système éducatif juste, qui soit accessible à tous, avec l'accent sur l'épanouissement individuel.

5. Nou le enn developman soutenab ek ekolojik ki respekté nou lanvironman, sovgard nou biodiversite ek servi nou potansyel maritim.

We are calling for a sustainable development programme which is sustainable, protects our bio-diversity and uses our huge maritime potential.

Nous soutenons un développement durable et écologique qui respecte notre environnement, tout en sauvegardant notre biodiversité, et exploite notre potentiel maritime.

6. Nou le enn lamenezman nou teritwar akot nou kapav respire ek sirkile an sekirite.

We call for a long term management plan of our landscape and territory where people can be free to move around within safe and healthy surroundings.

Nous prôtons un aménagement du territoire où tout un chacun pourra respirer et circuler en toute quiétude dans un environnement sain et sécurisé.

7. Nou le enn pli gran zefor pou demokratiz lasante avek pli gran lakse a bann swin medikal ek lanfaz lor prevansyon bann maladi. Nou le enn fon spesial pou kouver tou fre bann dimoun ki pa kapav opere Moris.

We call for a fairer access to proper healthcare for all, which puts a lot more emphasis on prevention rather than cure. We ask for the setting up of a special fund to cover all expenses relating to surgical operations which cannot be performed in Mauritius.

Nous demandons une plus grande démocratisation du secteur de la santé avec un accès amélioré aux soins médicaux et une attention particulière accordée à la détection/prévention de maladies. Nous demandons la création d'un fonds de soutien

pour les frais d'interventions chirurgicales qui ne peuvent être effectuées à Maurice.

8. Nou le ki mat kont bann trafikant ek baron ladrog ki pe gagrenn nou lazenes ek ogman problem dan nou pei (koripsyon, SIDA, prostitisyon...).

We want a step up in the fight against drug barons and drug trafficking which is ruining our youth and remains the source of many ills in our society (such as corruption, the spread of Aids and prostitution).

Nous exigeons un combat de tous les instants contre le trafic de la drogue et les barons qui dirigent ce trafic qui ne cesse d'entraîner le pays dans la spirale d'autres fléaux sociaux (corruption, SIDA, prostitution) qui pourrissent notre jeunesse et le pays dans son ensemble.

9. Nou le enn politik agrikol ki garanti lasekirite alimenter a traver enn reform agrer ek developman ek itilizasyon resours lokal otan ki posib.

We are calling for an agricultural policy which guarantees food security through agricultural reform and utilisation and development of local resources as far as possible.

Nous prôtons une politique agricole qui garantit la sécurité alimentaire à travers une réforme agraire et l'utilisation, autant que possible, de ressources locales.

10. Nou le ki akord plis latansyon pou lanseyman ek promosyon lakiltir avek tou kalite kreasyon artistik ek kiltirel dan Moris.

We are demanding a more concerted effort on educating the nation about our culture and promoting it through a myriad of artistic and cultural creations and events in Mauritius.

Nous demandons qu'une attention toute particulière soit accordée à l'enseignement et à la promotion de notre culture par le biais de toute une diversité de créations artistiques et culturelles dans le pays.

11. Nou le ki respekté nou drwa imin pou travay, garanti enn saler minimam rezonab (>Rs 8,000) ek fini ar lesklavaz bann travayer morisyen ek etranze.

We are calling for each and every individual's human right to work, to be set in stone and adhered to, as well as a fair, minimum salary scheme (>Rs 8,000) to be put in place. We also call for the abolition of modern slavery conditions for Mauritian as well as foreign workers.

Nous exigeons que le droit humain à l'emploi pour tout individu soit respecté et qu'un

salaire de base minimum et raisonnable (>Rs 8,000) soit mis en place. Nous demandons l'abolition des conditions d'esclavage dans lesquelles des travailleurs mauriciens et étrangers opèrent.

12. Nou le ki aret sibvansyonn bann group relizie sektaris ek kominalis – bann lorganizasyon swadizan sosio-kiltirel ki anpwazonn relasyon ant bann Morisyen ek souvan dikte seki gouvernman fer ou pa fer.

We call for a stop to all funding of religious and sectarian groups – the so-called socio-cultural organisations – which poison relations amongst the Mauritian people and often try to influence the powers that be in their decision-making.

Nous demandons l'arrêt des subventions aux groupes religieux et sectaires – les associations soi-disant socioculturelles – qui empoisonnent les relations au sein de la société mauricienne et qui souvent tentent d'influencer le gouvernement sur certaines de ses décisions.

13. Nou le enn sosiete akot pli boukou fam kapav zwe zot rol sitwayenn partou (napa zis dan politik/parlman ek sekter publik/prive).

We yearn for a society where far more women will have a greater role in all aspects of Mauritian life (and not only a minority in politics/National Assembly and in the public/private sectors).

Nous voulons d'une société où beaucoup plus de femmes seront actives et présentes dans tous les secteurs de la vie mauricienne et où elles pourront assumer pleinement leur rôle de citoyennes (pas juste une minorité de femmes présentes au parlement ou dans la vie publique/le monde des affaires).

14. Nou le enn veritab partenaria ant gouvernman, sekter prive, bann ONG ek lezot dimounn de bonn volonte pou amenn enn meyer lintegrasyon sosial bann andikape fizik ek mantal, bann anysin droge, prizonye ek prostitue, ek nou bann gran dimoun ousi, pou ki zot viv dan la dignite.

We are calling for a solid and durable partnership between government, the private sector, NGOs and other well-meaning individuals to facilitate the social integration of handicapped persons, ex-reformed drug addicts/alcoholics, ex-detainees, prostitutes as well as age-old pensioners so that they can all have a decent life.

Nous préconisons un partenariat solide et durable entre le gouvernement, le secteur privé, les ONG et toutes les forces vives et les personnes de bonne volonté afin d'assurer un meilleur encadrement social et une intégration adéquate des autrement capables,

d'anciens drogués/alcooliques/prisonniers, de prostituées ainsi que des personnes du troisième âge.

15. Nou le ki amelior bann infrastruktir piblik (fode pa ki trotwar enn danze pou piéton), refer ek ekler bann lari e, an atandan metro leze, reget transpor bis o nivo nasyonal afin ki tranpor par bis vinn plis efisian, mwins istresan ek enn plezir.

We call for a drastic overhaul of all public infrastructures (such as roads, lighting of same, footpaths etc) facilities and services. We ask for a rethink of the entire public transport system in order to make it more efficient, less stressful and a more pleasurable experience while preparing the arrival of the long-awaited light railway system.

Nous prôtons un réaménagement complet des infrastructures publiques (routes, éclairages et trottoirs par exemple). En attendant que le projet de métro léger se concrétise, nous demandons une refonte complète de notre système de transport public (autobus) afin de le rendre plus efficace, moins stressant et plus plaisant.

16. Nou le ki ankouraz bann lwazir ki bon (ek bann lespas rekreatif, sant sportif polivalan ek zardin zanfand partou-partou...) e aret proliferasyon bann kasino ek dekouraz ek elimin mantalite zougader.

We call for the promotion of healthier hobbies and sporting activities, helped by the creation of multi-sports complexes, activity centres and recreational areas, instead of the prevailing gambling culture and proliferation of casinos.

Nous sommes pour la promotion de loisirs sains avec la création d'espaces récréatifs et de centres sportifs polyvalents. Nous voulons décourager la mentalité du jeu qui prévaut aujourd'hui à Maurice et stopper la prolifération des maisons de jeux.

17. Nou le ki aret gaspiy larzan piblik brit-brit, par ekzanp dan bann gran-gran seremoni ofisiel ki napa raport nanye pou pei ek dibyen zeneral.

We want an end to the reckless spending of public money, for example in funding costly official ceremonies which do not generate any tangible benefits to the country and the population.

Nous voulons qu'on arrête le gaspillage irresponsable des fonds publics, par exemple dans des cérémonies officielles coûteuses qui n'ont presque pas de retombées positives pour le pays et le peuple.

18. Nou le ki bann valer etik aroz pei partou, fini ar koripsyon ek bann skandal politiko-finansye.

We want ethical principles to permeate society as a whole, an end to corruption and politico-financial scandals.

Nous voulons que des valeurs éthiques soient présentes à tous les niveaux de la société mauricienne, la fin de la corruption et les scandales politico-financiers.

19. Nou le transparans partou avek aprondisman la demokrasi ek bann liberte (i-konpri liberte lekspresyon, liberte bann media...) ek promilgasyon enn Freedom of Information Act.

We want transparency everywhere with further consolidation of democracy and our fundamental freedoms (including Freedom of Expression, Freedom of the Media...) and the promulgation of a Freedom of Information Act.

Nous réclamons plus de transparence partout avec la consolidation de la démocratie et de nos libertés fondamentales (y compris la liberté d'expression, la liberté des media...) et la promulgation d'une Freedom of Information Act.

20. Nou le ki nou gouvèrman travay ek sign bann lakor ek bann pei etranze ki sinserman anvi korper ek nou kouma enn Leta-losean/Leta arsipel dan enn perspektiv win-win, pa bann pei etranze ki nek rod eksplwat ek kokin nou larises. (cf Sagos ek Diego Garsia).

We want the government to work hand in hand with countries who genuinely care about our ocean state/archipelago and the preservation of such a status and not ones who are only interested in pillaging our natural resources (cf Chagos and Diego Garcia).

Nous demandons au gouvernement de travailler avec les pays qui respectent notre statut d'état océan/archipel et veulent sincèrement coopérer avec nous et non des pays qui ont seulement leurs intérêts à cœur et veulent piller nos richesses. (cf Chagos et Diego Garcia).

Manifeste écrit en Kreol par NAE. Les traductions en anglais/français sont de PEN
Pour le groupe 'WANTED : 15,000...'

30 out 2011 - 30 August 2011 - 30 août 2011

Appendix 2: Il faut amender la Constitution

Lalit
(Mauritius)

Le Dimanche
20 November 2012

Lindsey Collen, de Lalit:

"Il faut amender la Constitution"

Mme Lindsey Collen, porte-parole du parti Lalit, trouve qu'il faut "maintenant, amender la Constitution. Ôtons une fois pour toutes tout ce qui est communal dans la Constitution ou faisons table rase du système de *Best Loser*! Le gouvernement et l'Opposition ne peuvent trouver de faux-fuyants. Ils peuvent collaborer et avoir la majorité des trois quarts nécessaires pour amender la Constitution". Pour Lindsey Collen, "le jugement de la Cour suprême a contre-attaqué le jugement Balancy, mais également tous les jugements prononcés en Cour, depuis ces dix dernières années. C'est pour cela que Lalit n'avait pas voulu faire appel à la Cour suprême. Et nous sommes d'accord avec le jugement Seetuising, quand il disait que la Cour ne peut jouer au *Big Brother* et venir voir le *way of life* des Mauriciens. En ce sens, le jugement de la Cour suprême constitue une perte". Elle conclut en souhaitant "que gouvernement et Opposition aient le courage de toucher au système de *Best Loser*. Mais quand on sait qu'ils vont se baser sur le rapport Sachs, qui ne remettait pas en question ce système, il y a de quoi être inquiet!"

LPC012.026.001

Appendix 3 : From Stalin with Love

CAUT
Political Posters

L'EXPRESS
11 OCTOBER 2005

DEMOCRACY

From Stalin with love

11 Oct 05
CAUT

Dissent, these days, is a dirty world. Be it in Europe, the US or Mauritius, disagreeing with the government or the party line can lead to serious trouble.

Diren VALAYDEN
Outlook
Correspondent
in Dublin



The death of one of the world's greatest playwrights, Arthur Miller, earlier this year, was a blow to those on the outskirts of conventional thinking. The great man was known for his independent thinking and rigorous intellect. One of his wishes before he passed away was for fellow dramatists to show more dissent. Having himself critically analysed American society and especially the 'American dream', he urged playwrights to disagree with the status quo. It is obvious that he called for more dissent because of the quiet acquiescence of both public and politicians to the actions of the state. However, this same fear of Arthur Miller seems more realistic than we sometimes like to admit.

Last week, during the New Labour conference, something peculiar happened. When Jack Straw, the Foreign secretary, took to the stage and disputed the link between terrorism and the Iraq war, an 82 year old man, Walter Wolfgang, shouted "It's a lie". What happened next shocked the whole Labour

conference and Britain at large. Bouncers or 'heavies', all Labour volunteers, forcibly lifted the frail old man from his seat and kicked him out of the conference hall. He was then prevented from entering again under the Terrorism Act. This was a clear indication that dissent would not be allowed in the Labour conference. Head nodding is the only way to behave. After all, no one is to challenge the leadership on the decisions it takes.

Control freaks

In America, a great exporter of the democratic model, the situation is not much different. Cindy Sherman, whose son was killed in Iraq, started a protest during the summer. She first stalked the president at his ranch in Crawford, Texas. However, the hapless Bush ignored her, as she camped just outside his fence, protesting against the immorality of the war. Then, as the politicians returned to Washington, she moved her demonstration to the front lawn of the White House.

There, this solitary woman, though by then accompanied by many anti-war campaigners, was deemed too dangerous and suffered the same fate as Walter Wolfgang: forcible removal. Peaceful protest was again deemed too radical. And we should not forget that this is the same country that fought a civil war in the past over civil liberties among other issues.

LPC012.036.001

PTO

In Mauritius, many can identify with Walter Wolfgang. There are many who would like to disagree with the general direction of their party but circumstances make this impossible. The circumstance in question is the Stalinist approach of our political parties. Stalin, if we care to remember, is the guy that Lenin warned the Communist party against before his death. He wanted to see his influence diminished but his worst fears were realised as Stalin graduated to power and proceeded to eliminate, in one way or another, his opponents. Among the biggest casualties was Leon Trotsky, one of the original revolutionaries and perhaps one of the greatest minds of the Bolshevik Revolution.

Obviously, we are not at the same level of confrontation in Mauritius. However, there is a palpable detection of such a Stalinist attitude and control freakery. If we are to take another 'what-not-to-do' leaf from the New Labour book of running a conference, the ban on sweets is quite a remarkable one. Sweets were not allowed in, in case they were thrown at speakers. If this is extreme in nature, we can imagine a party conference in Mauritius. They usually amount to no more than a popular "crowd bath" for the main leaders. This type of sycophantic attitude is unashamedly displayed at any occasion, with a deluge of fireworks and wild senseless cheers.

Swapping allegiance

There is constant ship jumping in Mauritian politics, where one politician will change party overnight and this fits in the general context of the Stalinist approach. Take any party, even outside of the big three of the MMM, MSM and Labour and we can discern the same problem. The PMXD, PMSD, Lalit, etc. are all afflicted by this particular need to keep everyone toeing the party

line. Now, it would be unrealistic to suggest that a political party should not have a basic policy to which all members adhere. Sure enough, this makes the core of party politics. However, when it comes to crucial issues, some members, on grounds of conscience must be allowed to disagree without being ostracised.

However, in Mauritius, when people switch sides, it is often to do with personal reasons and a lack of conviction. It sometimes conforms to the stereotype of the politician engaging in politics for personal gain. And this is in complete conflict with the spirit of democracy itself, where debate should be encouraged. By contrast, Irish politics is more open to debate and disagreement.

Government backbenchers are often at odds with their party colleagues, rightly or wrongly, over policies. Mauritius could benefit from healthy discord within the political parties. In our context, where the electorate hands the whole parliament to one party, dissent among government ranks should be encouraged, without requiring the party member to jump the fence to the other side. In almost all democracies, we are now ending up with two big political blocks to choose from. But often, the difference is barely visible.

The recent German election displayed the current monotony of modern democratic nations. Though New Labour eventually apologised to Walter Wolfgang, it should produce a reflection on the true nature of those who declare themselves democrats. Mauritius has long been engulfed in such inside pacification of party rebels. It is now time for the different parties to challenge their Stalinist ghosts. Such unquestioning attitudes can not only damage the political parties themselves but also their rapport with the people. Who ever trusted lame ducks after all?

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